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Zimbabwe says NO

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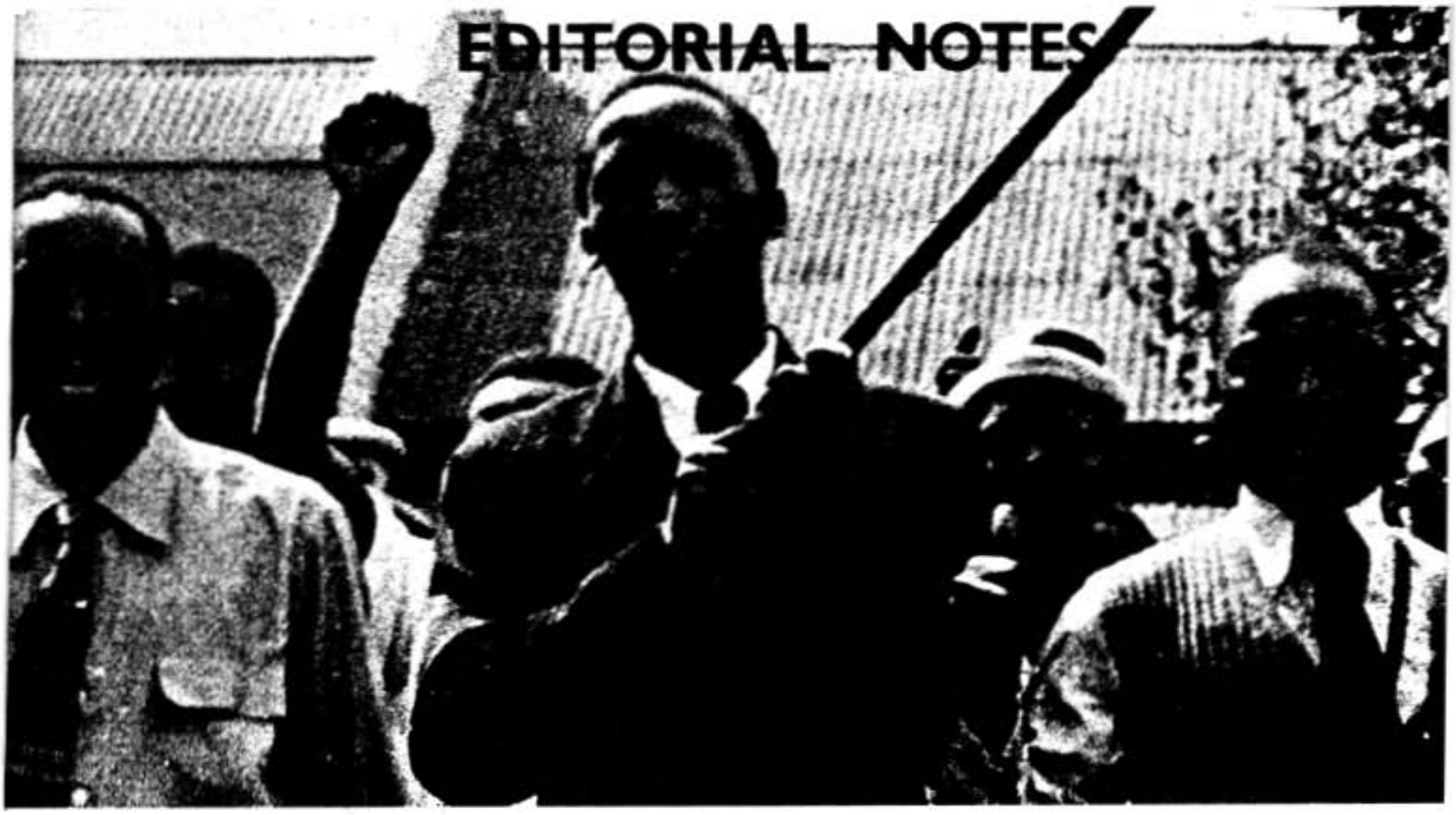


ZIMBABWE SAYS NO!

The massive rejection of the Smith-Home sell-out by the African people of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) proved a stinging rebuff for the White supremacists of Southern Africa and their supporters and backers in London, Washington, Lisbon and elsewhere. They had confidently hoped and believed the African people would be so cowed and disorganised by years of state terror and the banning of their political leaders and organisation that they would fail to oppose the 'constitutional arrangements' cooked up by the Smith regime and the British Tory government. In this they were grossly mistaken.

Not only in the urban areas, where the African working class demonstrated their feelings and views in the streets even when police intervention provoked, as usual, violence, but even in remote rural areas, supposedly safely under the control of pro-government chiefs, the people unequivocally gave their answer to Smith and the high-powered team sent from London to sell the agreement, the 'Pearce Commission'. The answer was NO!

Demonstrating that where there is a will of the people a way will be found, and the leaders will come forward, the hastily-formed African National Council, coming forward where there had appeared to be a political vacuum, mobilised the entire nation and enabled them to voice their opinion.

Taken in conjunction with the historic strike and continuing struggle of the African people of Namibia, analysed by Z. Nkosi in this issue of *The African Communist*, this great demonstration of the Zimbabwe people, undertaken in the teeth of the most formidable difficulties, opens the year 1972 on an exhilarating note for the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa. It opens a new chapter.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The agreement reached between British Foreign Secretary Sir Alec Douglas Home and Rhodesian Premier Ian Smith in November 1971 is merely a device to continue the exploitation of the human and natural wealth of Zimbabwe for the benefit of the White racists and the imperialists, while saving the face of Britain. It was the latest chapter in a long history of British aggression.

Rhodesia was founded by a combination of force and treachery when Cecil Rhodes, the arch-imperialist who was Prime Minister of the Cape and also President of the great diamond mining monopoly De Beers, set up the British South African Company which ruled the territory from 1890 to 1923.

The concession which King Lobengula had granted the company over the mineral rights of his kingdom was interpreted by Rhodes as a charter for conquest and occupation. A Pioneer Column sent from the Cape first hoisted the Union Jack at Fort Salisbury in 1890, and within three years King Lobengula was driven from his throne, dispossessed of his kingdom and hounded to his death. The basis had

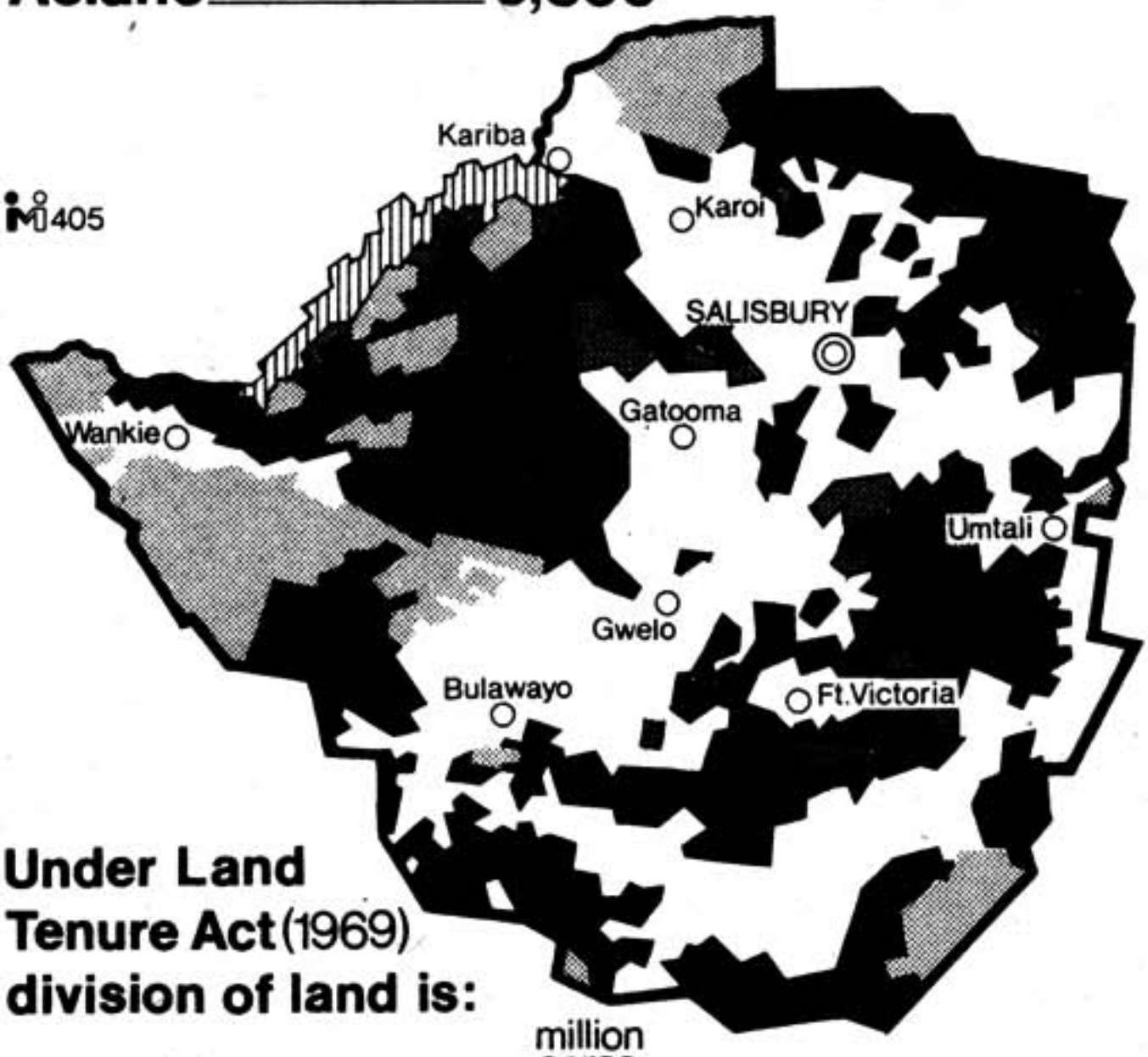
RHODESIA: THE BREAK-DOWN

POPULATION

Africans*	**5,220,000**
Europeans	**249,000**
Coloureds**	**16,900**
Asians	**9,300**

*Two thirds live in rural areas

**Mixed race



Under Land Tenure Act (1969) division of land is:

	million acres
National land	**6·0**
European areas	**45·0**
African areas	
Tribal Trust land	**39·9**
Purchase area	**3·7**

- **All towns are in European areas**
- **Much of best agricultural land is European**

been laid for White settlement and White Government, backed by the British South African Police force which still continues to function, using the very same name, under the present regime.

Rhodes based his political policies on the principle associated with his name of 'equal rights for all civilised men'. Thus the franchise in Rhodesia – up to the time the new Republican Constitution was introduced in 1969 – was always overtly 'non-racial'. The right to vote depended on financial and educational qualifications which, just as in South Africa, were always capable of modification to ensure that political power remained securely in White hands.

The financial qualification for the vote in 1898 was £50 a year. In 1914 it was raised to £100; in 1951 to £240. After 1957 the voters' roll was divided into two sections. From 1957 to 1961 the income qualification for the upper roll was raised to £720, in 1961 to £772.

Political segregation was introduced for the first time in the 1969 constitution, which established separate rolls for Europeans (including Coloureds and Asians) and Africans. Justifying the 1969 constitution, which was based on the principle of apartheid, Smith used Rhodes' formula that it would 'entrench government in the hands of civilised people for all time'.

To complete the picture, the Smith-Home agreement raises the income qualification for the African Higher Roll to £1050 a year. Once again Smith is able to recommend the agreement to his followers with the assurance that it guarantees that power will remain in 'civilised hands'.

Up to 1951, the highest number of African voters was 453; up to 1957, 560; up to 1961, 2,000. In 1965, under the 1961 constitution, there were 2,330 African voters on the A Roll and 10,689 on the B Roll, as against a total of 92,405 Whites on the A Roll and 614 Whites on the B Roll. For the 1970 election under Smith's Republican constitution, there were just over 87,000 European voters as against 8,326 African voters.

With a population of over 5 million Africans as against under 250,000 Whites, it is clear that White political control is as firmly entrenched in the constitution as at any time in the history of 'Rhodesia'.

The fraudulent assumption of the Home-Smith agreement is that with a gradual increase in the number of Africans with the requisite income and educational qualifications, African representation in

Parliament will gradually increase until eventual majority rule is achieved.

There may be a few Africans in Rhodesia with incomes of £1050 a year or over, but the Rhodesia Digest of Statistics published in June 1970 shows that the average annual wage in all industries is only £144 a year, with the lowest figure of £73 in the agricultural sector (where most Africans are employed) and the highest figure of £328 in banking, insurance and finance (where fewest Africans are employed). In the manufacturing industries, employing 75,000 Africans, the average annual African wage is only £238. The average White wage is ten times the average African wage.

There is not only an income 'qualification' but also an educational one to Africans seeking the vote. As for the educational situation, while schooling for non-Africans in Rhodesia is compulsory, facilities for Africans, segregated as they are, are totally inadequate.

The 1971 figures for African primary and secondary school enrolment are 637,423 and 26,183 (compared with 33,046 and 23,365 White children respectively). The Rhodesian Government spends ten times as much on the education of each White child as on that of each Black child. White schools are modern and well-equipped, while the African schools, particularly in the rural areas, are ill-equipped, dingy and in disrepair. The qualifications of teachers in African schools are much lower than those in White schools.

Thus of the Africans who enrol at the lowest school level, only 1 per cent get through to secondary school, as compared to 81 per cent of White children; and of that 1 per cent the majority fall away before they reach matriculation level, Of 63,380 African children who enrolled in standard 1 in 1956, only 876 reached Form 4 (standard 10) by 1965.

Between 1928 and 1964 only 94 Africans obtained High School Certificates, and only 5,701 finished four years of secondary education. Since four years of secondary schooling are required for African voters on the Higher Roll under the Smith-Home agreement, it can be seen that a complete revolution will be required in the African educational system as well as in the economy before White supremacy is threatened.

To 'increase African job and educational opportunities', both Britain and Rhodesia agreed at Salisbury – a sop to African and world opinion – to spend £5 million a year each on an agreed development programme. It is sought to give the impression that this will speed

advancement to majority rule. But in the London *Sunday Times* of 28th November, Dr. Claire Palley, Professor of Politics at Queen's University, a former resident of both South Africa and Rhodesia and an acknowledged authority on the subject, has estimated that 2035 is the earliest year when the number of African voters will exceed the number of White voters – and this assumes absolute good faith on the part of the Smith Government and all succeeding Governments, as well as a major increase in the output of the economy and the educational system. Dr. Palley says that a more realistic analysis shows that a century from now, in 2071, majority rule would still be many years away.

No wonder Smith said, in his radio broadcast on 25th November, that no European in Rhodesia need harbour any anxiety about his future in Rhodesia. Since 1890, power has always been firmly in White hands. Up to 1923 the country was the private property of the British South Africa Company. In 1922 a referendum was held to decide whether Rhodesia should become a fifth province of South Africa. The white voters opted instead for 'responsible' government, and so from 1923 Rhodesia was annexed to the British Dominions without ever passing through the phase of direct and colonial rule.

CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION

After the second world war, an attempt was made by the British and Southern Rhodesian Governments to impose White domination on the whole of central Africa by means of the Central African Federation, but in the face of determined African opposition this eventually broke up and Zambia and Malawi in due course obtained formal independence.

Even before the break-up of the Federation, Britain had granted Rhodesia its 1961 constitution which left the White racists in charge with wider powers of self-government, but still denied them 'independence'. It was to ensure absolute autonomy without making any concessions to the African majority that Smith declared UDI (unilateral declaration of independence) in 1965 after declaring a state of emergency, outlawing the African national organisations and imprisoning their leaders. He had been given the lion's share of the military equipment left over from the dissolution of the Federation to make his defiance of British, African and world opinion possible.

Since UDI, Zimbabwe has been made a happy hunting ground for the White racists and the imperialists. Without South African aid in every sphere Smith's Rhodesia would have collapsed on both the economic and military fronts. South Africa has been more than adequately repaid, and today Rhodesia is virtually a dependency of the Republic.

Most of Rhodesia's important industrial companies, though operating as separate managerial entities, have ties with South Africa; no less than five of Rhodesia's top ten listed industrial companies are either controlled by or associated with South African companies. The biggest of these companies, Rhodesian Breweries, also holds the key to the country's food and liquor industries, and is its biggest hotel developer.

South Africa's Anglo-American Corporation, through its Rhodesian subsidiary, is responsible for such key industries as steel (RISCO), coal (Wankie), nickel (Trojan-Bindura) and has important stakes in sugar, citrus and timber. Anglo-American, Johannesburg Consolidated Investment and S.A. Manganese lead the field in mineral prospecting and development which have been such a feature of the UDI period. A subsidiary of South Africa's Messina group is Rhodesia's biggest copper producer.

The Republic absorbs about 30 per cent of Zimbabwe exports for her own use and has become its most important outlet for asbestos and chrome. Including other commodities which are allowed to pass through its ports, South Africa probably accounts, directly and indirectly, for about half of Rhodesia's total exports.

South Africa probably also supplies more than half Rhosesia's imports through middlemen, with a heavy concentration on machinery, oil, vehicles and vehicle spares.

BRITAIN'S STAKE

Despite UDI and sanctions, Britain has continued to have a huge stake in Rhodesia. In 1965 the *Financial Times* estimated that between 200 and 300 British companies had interests in Rhodesia with investments of about £200 million. The journal added: 'British companies operate in Rhodesia through subsidiaries of their South African subsidiaries; in other (cases), British and South African minority shareholders are combined with local Rhodesian capital – sometimes in private companies, and disguised as bank nominees'.

The United States also has heavy investment in Rhodesia. A United Nations sub-committee specially set up after UDI to examine this problem concluded: 'Foreign interests, accounting for more than 80 per cent of all capital investment in Southern Rhodesia, have been instrumental (directly and indirectly) in denying Africans the means of effective participation in economic life and have placed serious obstacles in their way'. U.S. companies involved include Union Carbide Co. of the United States, the Vanadium Corporation of America, American Metal Climax and American Potash and Chemical Corporation.

Significantly, the decision of the United States Senate to allow Nixon once more to buy Rhodesian chrome which preceded Home's visit to Salisbury and was used by him as an argument to persuade Zimbabwe Africans whom he interviewed that sanctions were about to collapse.

Economic, political and military pressures faced the Smith Government with the prospect of collapse. The country's foreign currency reserves were running out, and South Africa had warned she herself was in difficulties and no longer able to help to the same extent as before. The birth-rate and unemployment among Africans was increasing – whereas in 1956, 19 per cent of all Africans were in paid employment, today the figure is about 14.5 per cent. Between 1962 and 1969 the number of Africans employed in the seven main urban centres increased by only 17,000. But in the same period the number of Africans born in these centres came to 187,000. The 80 per cent of the 5 million African population who are forced to make a living outside the cash economy were allocated only half the country's land in terms of the 1969 Land Tenure Act – the other half (naturally the better half) was given to the Whites. Conditions in the African reserves are steadily deteriorating.

It was to save Rhodesia as the centre-piece of the edifice of White supremacy in Southern Africa that Smith and Home reached their November agreement.

In the British Parliament there is much debate as to whether or no the agreement fits the so-called 'Five Principles' laid down by Home himself in 1964 as the basis for Rhodesian independence. Nowhere else is this debate taken seriously, for the argument is wholly spurious. The 'five principles' were followed by UDI. There is nothing to guarantee that Smith will keep to the present agreement; and even if

ıe does, there is nothing to ensure that it will culminate in majority rule at any time in the future.

The words of the agreement must not be allowed to conceal the naked reality – that the British Government intends to allow Zimbabwe to continue under the control of the Smith junta and on the basis of the 1969 apartheid constitution; that the African political organisations remain outlawed and their leaders remain in jail; that the Law and Order Maintenance Act, which provided for indefinite detention without trial and under which 170 Africans have been sentenced to death since UDI, remains in force.

THE PLOT FOILED

The role of the Pearce Commission, packed with ex-colonial civil servants, in the shoddy Smith-Home plot, was to convince African, world and British opinion that their deal met with the terms of the 'fifth principle' – that it was 'acceptable' to the majority in Zimbabwe. It was intended to bully and bamboozle the African people that they should accept 'half-a-loaf as better than no bread' and thus to gain recognition for Smith's regime and the end of U.N. sanctions.

This sinister plot was foiled by the courage and clear-sighted patriotism of the African people which – as usual – the colonialists grossly underestimated. They rejected the Salisbury Agreement with contempt. In the biting words of Bishop Muzorewa, Chairman of the African National Council:

> The constitutional provisions are so full of reservations and escape clauses, the declaration of rights so open to abuse, as to render the document meaningless. For every right there is a restriction which renders it void. The road to majority rule is booby-trapped every inch of the way.
>
> Does the British Government really believe that the Africans in Rhodesia are so stupid as to take this constitutional sham as genuine?

It remains, at the time of writing, to be seen what either the Pearce Commission or the British Tory government will now do. It seems incredible that the Commission will report – after the world has seen in newspaper pictures and television the overwhelming evidence of African rejection – that the deal is 'acceptable'. If it does so its reputation for integrity, and that of any British Parliament which

pretends to believe such a report, will be fatally undermined. If in the face of a negative report Westminster wants to press ahead with its plan to give five million Africans into the hands of the White slave-owners, how does it imagine that Africa and the United Nations could be persuaded to endorse this illegitimate agreement or call off sanctions?

Whatever the outcome, recent events have served to underline the truth that the future of Zimbabwe lies in the first place in the hands of her own people. They will receive sympathy and support in their struggles from the overwhelming majority of mankind. They will receive nothing at all from negotiations conducted over their heads by white racialists. In the end their liberation lies in their own organisation, unity and militant struggle.

CHINA AND THE WORLD

The entry of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations, so long and hopefully awaited, has thus far sadly disappointed the anti-imperialist and socialist forces which fought so manfully to secure it. It was accompanied by the epic struggle for the liberation of Bangladesh in which the newly-seated representatives of Peking, to the shocked anger of anti-imperialists everywhere, opportunistically sided with U.S. imperialism in backing the bloodstained Yahya regime.

The theme has been ably dealt with elsewhere in this issue by Dr. Dadoo; it remains only for us to add that such a policy has nothing in common with the principles of Marxism-Leninism or even with those of elementary solidarity in the anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist struggle.

The slide into narrow nationalism, accompanied by obsessive anti-Sovietism, cannot but arouse the liveliest fears concerning China's present direction and the future of the great Chinese people.

There was nothing which could allay such fears in the recent visit to China by U.S. President Nixon. Only the strength and closer unity of the socialist countries, the forces of national liberation and the international working class can effectively halt imperialist aggression and domination, and bring peace and freedom to the world. It is hard to believe that the U.S. - Chinese talks would contribute anything positive to these objectives.

DANGER SIGNALS IN KOREA

At the very time when the Nixon government is loudly proclaiming a policy of 'disengagement' in Indo China (while in practice escalating its bombing raids in Vietnam and other aggressive actions) a new threat of war has made its appearance in the American neo-colony of South Korea.

In the face of a strong movement both North and South of the border, for peaceful reunification through negotiation, the Pak Jung Hi puppet clique has embarked upon a series of adventurous provocations reminiscent of the prelude to imperialist intervention in an invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea some twenty years ago.

According to a statement of the D.R.P.K. Foreign Ministry the Seoul administration proclaimed a state of emergency on 6th December 1971, and since then has embarked upon a hysterical anti-Communist propaganda and mobilisation aimed at provoking a new war.

The peoples of our own country and other African states are called upon, as in 1950, to stand resolutely against this danger, for self-determination and peaceful reunification of a Korea torn asunder by imperialism.

EMILE BURNS

To innumerable revolutionaries in Africa and other parts of the world where the English language is understood, the books and writings of British Marxists were the door to which our minds were first opened to the most advanced and liberating thinking in the world.

A notable figure in this Enlightenment – for that it truly was – was Emile Burns, who was born in April 1889 and died in February 1972.

Among his innumerable productions, which included standard translations of such Marxist classics as *Anti-Duhring* and *Theories of Surplus Value*, was his *Handbook of Marxism*, a selection of key passages from the works of the giants of the Communist movement, which to many of us became something of a bible of revolutionary theory.

The African Communist pays tribute to the contribution of this outstanding Marxist scholar and teacher, and extends our sympathy to his family and comrades.

Namibia Strikes a Blow for Freedom

By Z. Nkosi

The great strike which started in Namibia on 13th December, 1971, almost totally paralysing the economy of the country has struck a blow against South African domination of the territory from which the racist regime will never recover. With the collaboration of her imperialist friends, South Africa may for a while continue to hang on by the exertion of brute strength, but any moral pretensions she may have claimed have been completely shattered.

Addressing the United Nations Security Council in September 1971 on the World Court's advisory opinion handed down in June 1971 that South Africa's presence in Namibia was illegal and 'South Africa is under obligation to withdraw its administration from Namibia immediately and thus put an end to the occupation of the territory', the South African Foreign Minister Dr. Hilgard Muller maintained there was peace, prosperity and progress in the territory.

> **I state categorically that there is no threat to international peace and security as a result of conditions there. Nor will there be, unless members of this organisation artificially create one as a pretext for the realisation of ulterior motives.**

On economic development, Dr. Muller said:

> Here we have to deal with allegations that the inhabitants are in a state of constant economic servitude, even that they are reduced to starvation. Facts and figures give the lie to these allegations. The economic life of the territory continues to prosper – and at a gratifying rate. For this, the credit is in a large measure due to the efforts of the South African Government.

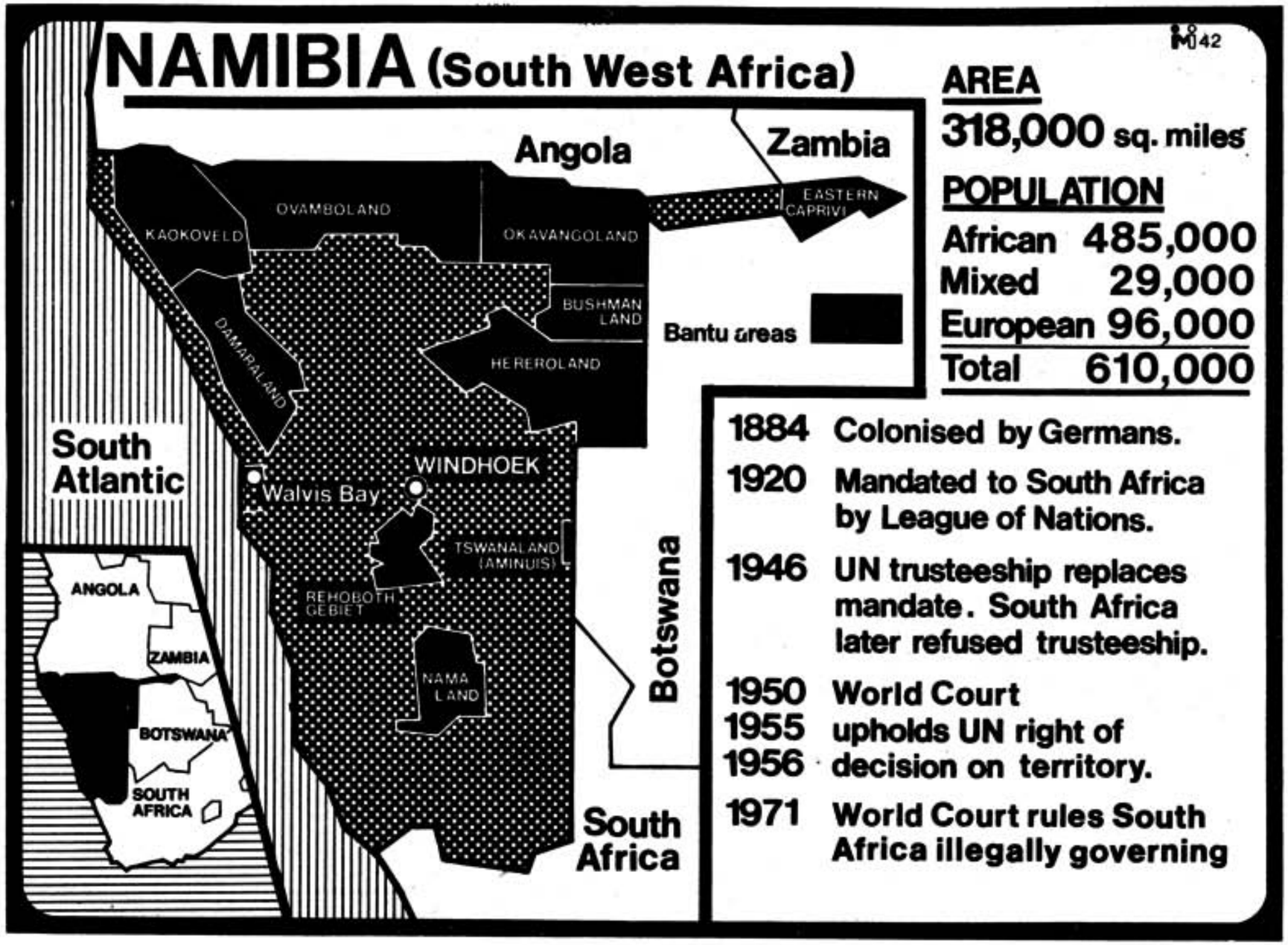
Dr. Muller said it had been alleged in the United Nations that South Africa was oppressing the peoples of South West Africa, was failing to promote their welfare and was denying them their right to self-determination.

> Nothing could be further from the truth. In the political field my Government is making determined efforts to bring the peoples of South West Africa towards self-government. Ovambo and Kavango now both have their Legislative and Executive Councils functioning. This process will continue until the stage of full self-determination, based on the will of the peoples, is reached.

The South African Government is adept not only at self-deception but also at deceiving others. In June 1971 – just before the World Court judgement was announced – a group of foreign journalists was taken on a conducted tour of South West Africa, including the so-called 'homelands' or 'Bantu areas' by Mr. R.F. Botha, Nationalist M.P. for Wonderboom, and Mr. David Tethill, of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Afterwards Peter Younghusband wrote in the *Sunday Times*:

> This has been a completely free and fair tour. The result has been severely damaging to the credibility of the United Nations . . . Ovamboland is a Black man's country where there is no racial friction, very little apartheid and the Black Ovambos and White Security Police sing songs together . . . . . It is a flourishing territory of happy people . . . . .
>
> Throughout our tour of Ovamboland – the area where most of the alleged atrocities are said to be perpetrated – I saw no evidence of oppression of the Africans. We were also given this assurance by Chief Councillor Ushona Shiimi, of the Ovamboland Executive Council. He said: 'There is no truth in these stories of atrocities. There is no injustice against Black men in my country. We are happy under the care and protection of the South African Government'.


NAMIBIA (South West Africa)
M42
Angola
Zambia
OVAMBOLAND
KAOKOVELD
OKAVANGOLAND
EASTERN CAPRIVI
BUSHMAN LAND
DAMARALAND
HERERO LAND
Bantu areas
South Atlantic
WINDHOEK
Walvis Bay
TSWANALAND (AMINUIS)
REHOBOTH GEBIET
NAMA LAND
Botswana
South Africa
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
BOTSWANA
SOUTH AFRICA
AREA
318,000 sq. miles
POPULATION
African 485,000
Mixed 29,000
European 96,000
Total 610,000
1884 Colonised by Germans.
1920 Mandated to South Africa by League of Nations.
1946 UN trusteeship replaces mandate. South Africa later refused trusteeship.
1950 World Court
1955 upholds UN right of
1956 decision on territory.
1971 World Court rules South Africa illegally governing

THE STRIKE DISPELLED THE MYTHS

The strike of the contract workers has dispelled these myths totally. A whole people has risen in protest against their exploitation and oppression. Foreign Minister Hilgard Muller has up to the time of writing taken refuge in silence. Chief Councillor Shiimi has been spared the necessity of facing his angry people by getting himself killed in a car accident on 14th November, 1971. But the adaptable Peter Younghusband wrote in the *Sunday Times*, one week after the outbreak of the strike:

> The Ovambo strike has dealt a serious blow to South West Africa's industry and thrown into confusion the South African Government's policy on S.W.A. . . What has caused most shock is the realisation that the Ovambos, around whom the Government are painstakingly building a model Bantustan, have suddenly demonstrated a sharp independence of spirit and a remarkable ability to organise themselves into a cohesive force of mass protest.
>
> Most White South West Africans are recalling that the Ovambos – 300,000 strong and the country's largest ethnic group – are the people on whom so much reliance was placed to vote in favour of continued South African trusteeship in the plebiscite recently offered at the World Court hearing at the Hague. That offer was rejected. Thank heavens, everyone in Windhoek is now saying.

White South African and South West African politicians have been trying to argue that the whole strike is the work of foreign agitators and intimidation. It is worth recalling Peter Younghusband's report at the time (December 19th):

> So far as can be ascertained, there is no political motive. Brigadier E. de W. Brandt, Divisional Commissioner of Police, exhausted after a week of 18-hour days (he sleeps in his office) told me: 'We do not yet know what is behind this. We just don't know'.

The Security Police had evidently been spending too much time singing songs instead of studying the realities of the situation. In the words of Anglican deacon Mr. David de Beer: 'The Whites don't want to listen. They are living in a Utopia here and they don't want it spoilt. They don't want to know anything that might spoil their pleasures or lighten their wallets'.

The facts show that the impoverishment and persecution of the indigenous peoples of the territory had reached the point where an explosion was inevitable.

CONTRACT LABOUR

One aspect of the strike can be grasped immediately from a study of the position of the Ovambo people in relation to the total population, and more especially in relation to the total of contract labourers.

The latest official estimates of population available are for 1966 and are as follows:

Group	Numbers	Percentage
Ovambo	270,900	44.40
Whites	96,000	15.73
Damara	50,200	8.23
Herero	40,000	6.56
Nama	39,400	6.46
Okavango	31,500	5.18
East Caprivians	17,900	2.93
Coloured	15,400	2.52
Rehobothers	13,700	2.24
Bushmen	13,300	2.18
Tswana and others	11,300	1.85
Kaokovelders	10,500	1.72
	610,000	100.00

The involvement by ethnic group of the African male labour force in the South West African economy in 1966 is stated by the Government's 'South West Africa Survey' published in 1967 to be as shown on the table overleaf. The involvement of the Africans in the cash economy can be taken to have increased considerably since then. The country's gross domestic product in 1965 was R213.9 million. By 1969 it had risen to R368.9 million. Figures given during the recent strike by an official of the South West African Native Labour Association (SWANLA) show that the number of Ovambo recruits passing through Grootfontein on their way south had risen to 39,000 a year, coming in at the rate of more than 3,000 a month. Since contracts last between 12 and 18 months, the total of Ovambo employed in 1971 must have been much higher than the 1967 figure given in the table overleaf.

THE HUNGRY HALF

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Industry	Ovambo	Nama	Herero	Damara	Other	Total
White agriculture	9,532	3,033	3,173	4,451	2,884	23,073
Mines, commerce, industry	20,651	1,516	2,652	2,612	248	27,679
Public services (excluding local authorities)	6,748	1,362	1,237	2,582	1,683	13,612
Domestic service	2,164	762	131	535	87	3,679
Shopkeeper and togtwork	194	562	258	336	163	1,513
TOTAL	39,289	7,235	7,451	10,516	5,065	69,556

At any rate, the figures make it plain that the economy of South West Africa depends almost wholly on the availability of Ovambo contract labour. Once that labour was withdrawn, the economy was rapidly brought to a standstill.

The question has been asked: why did only the Ovambo workers go on strike? The figures above supply most of the answer. In many industries, and particularly on the mines, the entire labour force consisted of Ovambo contract workers. But that other groups supported the strike cannot be disputed. SWANLA tried, but failed, to obtain recruits from other sections of the population. The Government made urgent approaches to especially the Kavango and Damara peoples, and their stooge authorities and chiefs issued appeals to their 'subjects' to come forward for recruitment. But there were no scabs. Chief Clemens Kapuuo, the elected leader of the Herero people, said in a press interview that only a complete scrapping of contract labour would satisfy the territory's Africans. 'There must be discussions with all groups. I think South West Africa's African people would be completely united, because they all suffer the present system.'

Although he is the elected and popular leader of his people, recognised as successor to the late Hosea Kutako, Chief Kapuuo is not recognised by the South African Government, who find him too independent for their liking. One of the most important consequences of the strike has been to expose the Government-appointed authorities

and chiefs as the agents of apartheid. Their instructions were defied by the masses. None of them were elected to office by their people. Both the Ovambo and Kavango Legislative and Executive Councils – and they are the only two groups in South West Africa to get them so far – were appointed by the Government. The strike has struck a mortal blow at the Government's attempt to foist the concept of Bantustan on the African people.

STARVATION WAGES

The Government's 1967 'South West Africa Survey' says:

> The degree to which the indigenous inhabitants take up wage employment is a measure of their interest in achieving higher standards of living . . . in South West Africa 60.7 per cent of all Native males, irrespective of age, were classified as economically active in 1960, as compared with 55.4 per cent for the Bantu of South Africa.

Considering the greater economic development of South Africa, the higher involvement of the Namibian Africans in wage employment is a measure not only of their greater interest but also of their greater poverty.

The recruiting of contract labour in Namibia has gone on for the last 50 years. At first recruitment was haphazard, with each employer or group of employers seeking its own labour supply and arranging its own terms. Since 1943 all recruiting has been handled by the South West African Native Labour Association, whose shareholders are the South West African Administration, the Northern Labour Organisation (one of the bodies which existed before SWANLA's formation), and Anglo-American's Consolidated Diamond Mines, each holding one share, plus an organisation called the S.W.A. Society of Farmers Employers of Contracted Natives, which holds two shares.

SWANLA first estimates the demand for labour, and then makes its recruiting arrangements. The following description of how the system works was given in evidence to a United Nations Committee by an Ovamboland resident:

> If a reserve does not supply enough labour, it is looked upon as a bad reserve. A message comes from the Commissioner to the welfare officer. The welfare officer calls the headmen and reserve board members. The welfare officer reads the letter to the board members, and tells them that they want a

> certain number of labourers to work on the farms or on the roads, and this number must be supplied. If that number is not supplied, the headmen and board members are scolded. Then the Ovambo is sent off with a ticket. He does not know where he is going. The name of the master and the place are written on the label, and the people at the railway station send him where he has to go. After the station master has read the label, he rings up the police station to come and fetch this 'parcel', and he is taken to the police station, from where he is fetched by the farmer or taken by the police to the farmer. Sometimes men have to walk for fifty to sixty miles. They may just be shown the road and told to go.

Every employer must pay a recruiting fee of R25 an African; the tribal head in turn gets only R1 for each recruit produced. The recruiting system is a prison-like system of forced labour from which the recruit cannot ever escape. No African may leave his reserve unless he is in possession of a contract; nor may he leave the police (White) zone unless he is in possession of a discharge certificate signed by his employer. It is a criminal offence to leave a job during the period of the contract, and the railways are under instructions to refuse to sell a ticket to any African who is not in possession of his proper documents.

SWANLA has its scale of minimum wages, which vary according to the age and experience of the worker and his state of health. An A class worker is completely fit, a B class worker less so, a C class worker is either a juvenile (under 16) or an adult with some injury or impediment. A class C juvenile, inexperienced, qualifies for R3.75 a month, a class A experienced worker returning to his previous employer gets R8.25 minimum. The 1967 Government 'Survey' estimates that wages paid in kind in the form of accommodation, food, certain items of clothing, medical attention etc. may be valued at about R10 a month. At best this still leaves the worker far below the bread line; at worst these 'extras' amount to almost nothing at all. Many farmers, for example, provide no housing at all and expect their labourers either to construct their own or to sleep under a bush. Conditions in the urban or mining compounds are on the whole indescribably bad. In the new township of Katutura near Windhoek workers complained of indescribable squalor. The *Star* described it last year as

> a soulless settlement of row upon row of nasty little houses separated into tribal areas . . . The Ovambo compound, which houses 5,220 Ovambo contract

labourers, is so bad that even the armed police, whose job it is to keep order, are under orders not to enter it.

One worker during the strike last December said: I knew when I came to Windhoek that once I am in there, I am in hell.'

There have been repeated riots in Katatura against the conditions and police harassment. In June last year 800 were arrested and thousands screened after a mass police raid. In November, after police had erected a new control and checkpoint at the entrance to the compound, the inmates revolted and in one savage outburst wrecked the new buildings, broke up furniture and fittings, and ripped off the new security gates. When the police arrived, their cars were stoned. No arrests were made at the time, but later there was another army-style police raid and again nearly 300 Africans were brought before the courts.

It was against this background of tension that the strike began the following month. If conditions in Windhoek, the capital, were 'hell', they were no better elsewhere. Wages were not subject to negotiation – the worker got what was laid down in his contract and that was that. There are no trade unions and strikes are forbidden. Some employers claimed they paid more than the minimum wage. For example, the SWANLA minimum for recruited mine labour was a cash wage of R8.69 a month, but the Government 'Survey' claims the actual average in October 1966 was R17.58. It is significant, however, that the shut-down in the mining industry was complete, except at Consolidated Diamond Mines works at Oranjemund, where Anglo-American, already paying a minimum wage of R27.30 for unskilled workers, almost immediately offered a 10 per cent increase in an effort to stop the slide of workers who had begun to join the strike. The general manager of Consolidated Diamond Mines told the *Rand Daily Mail* correspondent in Windhoek at the end of December: 'I have received a deputation from the Ovambos here who made it clear to me that they are against the contract labour system and asked me to put forward their view to Government officials. I have done so.'

Newspapermen who interviewed strikers in various parts of Namibia found the average wage to be from R6 to R8 a month – about half the starting wage of recruited mineworkers in South Africa, and they are the lowest paid of all African workers in S.A. industry. Yet let us

turn to Dr. Hilgard Muller again, enlightening the United Nations in his speech last September.

'Per capita income (in S.W.A.) was the highest in Africa in 1966 – R491 – three times as high as that of Zambia and 10 times that of Tanzania.' Listening to Dr. Muller, you might be forgiven for thinking Black Namibians are better off than their compatriots either in South Africa itself or anywhere else in Africa. In fact, the opposite is the case. It is the enormous disparity between Black and White wages, plus the super-profits extracted by the White capitalists from exploited Black labour, which raises the S.W.A. per capita income above that of the rest of the continent.

A white shift boss on the Tsumeb mines was paid R375 a month in 1966, plus a safety bonus of R10 plus a production bonus. The salary of a white mine captain was R435 a month. At the very moment of Dr. Muller's speech, the average White was earning in a month more than the highest paid African workers in a year. White schoolchildren recruited as scabs during the strike were paid R109 a month.

THE PROFITEERS

But the biggest beneficiaries of the Namibian slave labour system are, of course, the bosses. Details of economic development in Namibia are difficult to obtain, as all statistics are now consolidated with those of the Republic. The breakdown of the gross domestic product given in the Government 'Survey' applies to the year 1965:

Agriculture	16.8 per cent
Fishing	3.2
Mining	46.6
All other sectors	33.4

The proportions have undoubtedly changed since then, and mining now provides well over 50 per cent of revenue, totalling about R200 million a year. Diamonds constitute about 60 per cent of all mine production. Most of the diamonds are produced by Consolidated Diamond Mines, a subsidiary of De Beers, which holds a concession in the coastal desert region covering an area 60 miles wide and 220 miles long, and whose net annual profits in recent years have averaged R50 million.

Eighty per cent of base mineral production is in the hands of the Tsumeb Corporation, in which two large United States companies, American Metal Climax and Newmont Mining Corporation are the principal shareholders. From 1947 to 1966 the gross value of metals produced by Tsumeb amounted to nearly R500 million. Between 1958 and 1965 the company's net profits totalled R74 million. Its profits in 1967 alone were over R19 million.

South West Africa's biggest mining development in recent years has been the uranium mining operation at Rossing, near Swakopmund, in which British and South African capital are joined. The South African Industrial Development Corporation is to contribute about R60 million loan capital to the project, but Rio Tinto Zinc will have the principal share of the R30 million equity with General Mining (the joint enterprise of Federale Mynbou and Anglo-American) and the West German Deutsche Urangesellschaft as junior partners. Production at the mine is expected to start in the mid-70s, and in defiance of United Nations resolutions Britain has agreed to buy 7,200 tons of uranium worth about R70 million from Rio Tinto between 1976 and 1982.

But if mining provides the bulk of Namibia's exports, valued at R128 million in 1966, agriculture and fishing make a sizeable contribution, totalling in 1966 R33 million and R49 million respectively. Fifty-four per cent of total exports in that year went to South Africa, and the remainder overseas.

Total investment in mining, fishing and manufacturing in Namibia was estimated by the *Financial Mail* in February 1971 as about R100 million, of which R40 million comes from South Africa and just over R50 million from all other foreign countries. The balance is held by Namibian Whites. 90 per cent of Namibia's imports come from South Africa.

The return on this investment in Namibia is enormous. In 1962 the Vice-President of Newmont, Mr. M.D. Banghart, told the annual meeting of the American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical and Petroleum Engineers that American firms doing business in South Africa made an average profit of 27 per cent on their investments – a rate higher than they could obtain anywhere else in the world. With the wages of contract labour pegged and profits soaring, the percentage return on capital invested has probably risen in the intervening years. Certainly, the interest of foreign capitalists has not abated. In November 1970

the Johannesburg *Star* reported: 'A number of America's mining companies have decided to enter or re-enter the mining industry in South Africa and South West Africa where, apparently, they consider the political and economic stability more assured than in many other areas of the world.' Bethelehem Steel, Hanna Mining, Phelps Dodge and Marcona Corporation were amongst the companies sniffing around. All this at a time when Nixon was officially claiming to be discouraging further US investment in Namibia!

Eager for the pickings, other foreign companies have begun to show interest in Namibia, and the administration has encouraged widespread exploration and prospecting activity for oil and base metals. Subsidiaries of Falconbridge Nickel of Canada have begun work on developing a R4 million copper mine near Windhoek. French, U.S., British, Canadian and South African companies are searching for oil.

Perhaps the most sinister development of all is the Kunene River scheme, estimated to cost R200 million, in which South Africa and Portuguese interests are combining to harness the waters of the river for purposes of irrigation and electric power for Angola and South West Africa. Like the Cabora Bassa project in Mozambique, the Kunene scheme is intended to be not merely a scheme for economic development, but the construction of a bastion for white settlement and hegemony in all Southern Africa.

West German capital was going into property in Namibia, reported the *Sunday Times* in July 1970. And precisely one year later a leading Johannesburg estate agent, Mr. Wilfred Isaacs, returned from a visit to Namibia describing Windhoek as 'a property developers' paradise.' Rubbing his hands at the prospects, he said property values in the centre of Windhoek had risen by more than 30 per cent in the last three years. The housing shortage was so severe that people were letting their servants' quarters as flats for whites for as much as R60 a month.

This ruthless looting of the wealth of Namibia – all the more intensified as the prospect of the end of South African rule looms near – last year provoked the Herero leader Chief Kapuuo to protest. In a letter to his solicitor in London, dated 3rd September 1971, he wrote:

I am deeply concerned, and so are my peoples, with the way the natural mineral resources of this country are being removed from it with the full knowledge and permission of the South African Government . . . .

Apart from its mineral wealth, which is substantial, South West Africa is a poor country. The Africans who will be brought to these mines under the contract labour system, who will work for periods of twelve to eighteen months deprived of their natural family life, unable by current laws to negotiate their salary, and prevented under strict laws from bettering their conditions, benefit but little.

This country, which is our country, is being exploited by greedy entrepreneurs, robbed of its wealth, and rendered barren for the future. Our fear is that when freedom finally comes to this land, it will be returned to us with no minerals left . . . The one wonderful asset which we have for developing the land for the well-being of all its people will have been taken away from us.

We deplore what the Government in Pretoria is currently allowing. We have not been consulted in all this . . . .

We would like to make it clear that in this matter our appeal as the Herero nation does not in any sense preclude appeals by other African peoples in this territory. At a time when the International Court has declared South Africa's continuing presence in South West Africa to be illegal, we would urge that immediate steps be taken by the highest bodies to protect the rights of the indigenous peoples of this territory from being exploited.

We wish all foreign firms to be removed immediately. We wish to be consulted on ways and means by which our peoples can have a fairer share in benefitting from the wealth of the land of their birth.

VORSTER THROWS IN POLICE

At the time of writing, the strike was still at its height, the Government was still engaged in negotiations with employers and territorial authorities (though refusing to meet the strikers' leaders), and police reinforcements had been flown into Ovamboland. In face of the demands of the elected strike committee for the complete scrapping of the contract labour system, the Bantu Administration Department had merely promised minor modifications. The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Maj. Gen. T. Crous said in Pretoria:

> The police are not moving into Ovamboland because of any trouble. We are merely augmenting the established force there because we haven't broken the back of this strike yet, and we must take measures to guard against an internal flare-up.

Clearly the stage was being set for the use of strong-arm methods by the police to smash the strike and force the workers back to their jobs at the point of a gun. Whereas in the White zone the strike took place in the presence of local and foreign pressmen and observers, so that the Government was forced to exercise forbearance, behind the security screen in the reserves the Government can revert to the use of brute force which has typified its rule even since it came to power, and the rule of the previous German and South African Governments in Namibia since the beginning of White conquest. The notorious Terrorism Act was first born of the necessities created by the resistance movement in Namibia, and the Government can be expected to make full use of its unlimited powers in its bid to quell the present disturbances.

Force can be the only Government answer in Namibia, just as in South Africa, to the demands of the workers. As a spokesman of WENELA, South Africa's major recruitment agency said, commenting on the Ovambo strike:

> **If the Government insists that Africans stay in their homelands, African workers will never be able to sell their labour on a free market. There has to be a contract system.**

The spokesman said he was in favour of allowing African workers to sell their labour on a free market, but added: 'This is not possible under present Government policy.'

Bantustans and migratory labour go together. There can be no scrapping of the one without the scrapping of the other. It is precisely because the Ovambos have struck at the very heart of the apartheid system that the Government can be relied on to bend every effort to defeat them. There are important differences between the structure of the labour force in the mining industry in Namibia and that in South Africa. The following table shows the composition of African labour force of members and contractors of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA) (i.e. most gold and coal mines in South Africa) as at December 31st, 1969:

Area from which recruited	Number	Percentage
South Africa	116,530	31.40
Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland	84,875	22.87
East Coast (Mozamibque etc.)	99,807	26.90
Tropical territories (Malawi etc.)	69,858	18.83
	371,070	100.00

On the one hand, this indicates why there is no single group who can shut down the South African mining industry at one stroke as the Ovambos did in Namibia. The labour force is dispersed, with the bulk of workers coming from outside South Africa. The South African mining industry has long based its labour control system on the tactic of divide and rule, playing off one ethnic group against another.

On the other hand, the enormous publicity which the Ovambo strike has received in South Africa is a guarantee that no section of the labour force has failed to understand the demonstration of the immense power of the working class once there is unity, leadership and cohesion. Without firing a shot or using any form of violence, the Ovambo workers have paralysed the economy of Namibia. The South African Government's whole Bantustan policy is based on the premise that migratory labour is the only alternative to the establishment of a powerful urban African proletariat, the only means of preventing the growth of African trade union and political power, the only way to prevent integration and the ultimate destruction of White supremacy. Yet Namibia, where there are no trade unions, has shown the tremendous power of the African migratory workers, despite all the activities of the Security Police. The major worry of the Vorster Government must now be – what is to prevent this poison spreading not only to the South African workers, but also to the workers of all the countries of Southern Africa from which her migratory labour force is drawn? The so-called backward and undeveloped Namibia has pulled off, with shattering effect, the greatest strike of African workers since the great mineworkers strike on the Witwatersrand in 1946. This could well prove to be the beginning of a tidal wave which sweeps through all of white dominated Africa. It is perhaps symptomatic that at this very juncture the hideous Voortrekker monument near Pretoria is reported to be threatened with collapse.

PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE

It is important to emphasise here that the Ovambo strike did not come – as press reports have tried to convey – as a bolt from the blue. It was the culmination of years, nay decades, of stubborn resistance by the Namibian people, of growing and seething anger against the conditions in which they are forced to live and work by their South African overlords, aided and abetted by Western imperialism.

From the time of the first German conquest, no section of the Namibian people has submitted to this foreign tyranny, but has continued to assert, stubbornly and unyieldingly, its right to self-determination and independence, its right to enjoy the full fruits of its labour instead of being robbed and exploited by local and overseas capitalists. Without delving too deeply into history, one need only mention the Herero war against the Germans, the Bondelswarts risings, the continuous struggles of the Rehobothers, the battles for land of the various Ovambo tribes, the Windhoek location shootings in 1959, the names of Namibian heroes like Hosea Kutako, Maharero, Morris, Witbooi, Ja-Toivo and many, many others, some who have died in the hands of the Security police, and others who are still languishing in detention or who have been jailed for life under the Terrorism Act – all this shows that the spark of resistance has never failed to glow in the hearts of the people and needs only the breath of opportunity and hope to fan it into a roaring flame.

In its bid to dominate Africa, South Africa turned the Caprivi Strip into an armed camp and built there an enormous air base from which it is capable of launching an attack on any independent African country. In 1966 the South West Africa People's Organisation launched its campaign of armed struggle and has steadily built up its counter-attacks on the White racists in the ensuing years. With the use of ferocious measures the South African forces have attempted to cow the Caprivian people into submission, but with the backing of the people SWAPO fought back. On January 7th 1972, the *Rand Daily Mail* gave the South African death toll in this savage border battle as 17 – seven of the deaths occurred in 1971 and one as a result of the most recent landmine incident in January 1972. To judge by the furious threats of Vorster against the Zambian Government for 'harbouring terrorists', the likelihood is that South African casualties are in fact far higher than have been officially admitted.

Nor has SWAPO's guerrilla work been confined to the Caprivi strip. Groups of guerrillas have penetrated far into the interior of South West Africa. One group whose activities were publicised conducted widespread training operations for over a year from a secret base in Ovamboland until they were discovered by the police. The South African Government is still offering a reward of R1,000 for information leading to the capture of one of SWAPO's guerrilla leaders Israel Iyambo who has

been operating successfully in northern Namibia over a period of several years.

The armed struggle of the Namibian fighters could not fail to rouse an echo in the breasts of the whole Namibian people, to give them the perspective of future liberation and growing confidence in their ability to achieve it, because the freedom fighters were seen to be acting not in isolation but in conformity with the repeated resolutions of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity demanding the end of the South African occupation. Then came the decision of the World Court in June 1971, destroying completely any legal or moral claims which South Africa could advance to justify her presence in Namibia.

Public agitation and opposition to apartheid mounted. Already in March 1971, the Rehobothers had decided not to pay taxes either to the South West Africa Administration or to the South African Government in protest against the South African occupation and the activities of the Government's Rehoboth Development Corporation. In July 1971 the Rehoboth Volksparty, which had just won a landslide victory in the triennial elections for the Rehoboth Council, sent an urgent appeal to the Security Council 'to implement the decisions of the World Court as soon as possible because the South African Government is continuing its rapid application of apartheid within South West Africa.'

Also in July 1971 two churches, representing more than half the population of South West Africa, called on Vorster to set up a 'separate and independent state' in South West Africa. In an open letter to the Prime Minister circulated widely in the territory the joint church committees of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-Kavango Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in SWA, formerly the Rhenish Mission, listed the violations of human rights in the territory and added: 'Our people are not free and in the manner in which they are treated they do not feel safe'. In an unprecedented gesture, Vorster met the leaders of the two churches, Bishop Leonard Auala and Pastor Paulus Gowaseb, to discuss their grievances. The two bishops said the Prime Minister's rejection of the World Court judgement indicated that 'the present conditions and bad treatment that followed from it would be perpetuated.' Apartheid meant subjection and slavery for the Namibian people. Bishop Auala said:

> The police abuse their powers. Innocent people were hit and tortured. They were given electric shocks and were intimidated. Rifles were aimed at them and they were threatened with death. Today we all fear the police. They treat us not as people but as the devil.

The talks ended in deadlock, with Vorster insisting that the policy of separate development was the only solution. This created a head-on conflict between State and Church in Namibia. Later in the year the Anglican Bishop of Damaraland, the Right Rev. Colin Winter, condemned apartheid as a sin which caused endless suffering to the poor of the community. In reprisal, the Government restricted and deported many church leaders. By December 1971 one third of the Anglican Church's workers had been victimised in one way or another and 16 other church workers had been hit by the Government. Dr. Bruckner de Villiers of the Christian Institute said both sides were 'poised for a traumatic confrontation' which would inevitably 'result in a mutually damaging catastrophe'.

On August 22nd, 1971, the *Sunday Times* reported from Windhoek:

> The Government are facing serious and unexpected difficulties in implementing their separate development policy in South West Africa. There are clear indications that a growing and influential group of Non-Whites – probably the majority – are not only rejecting the policy in its present form but are coming out more openly than ever before in opposing it.

In November 1971 Chief Clemens Kapuuo of the Herero, Chief Hendrik Witbooi of the Nama, leaders of the Rehoboth Volksparty, Mr. J.W. Jagger, leader of the People's Voice, a newly formed political party. and leaders of other groups and organisations met in Windhoek to discuss preparations for a 'summit conference' between all Non-White political leaders in South West Africa in February 1972. This was the first time common action of this kind had been mooted in Namibia. A press correspondent commented: 'The significance of this move lay in the common recognition by non-white peoples that the South African Government has deliberately tried to keep them separate from each other, in the face of a common cause and a common opponent. The development of militancy among the Ovambo . . . . . indicates the start of a nation-wide movement against the South African authorities.'

All this ferment culminated in the great December strike, which presents the South African Government with its greatest challenge and

the Namibian people with their greatest triumph and their greatest opportunity. This strike is not a local issue, but one which affects the future of all Southern Africa, the security of all independent Africa and the maintenance of world peace. It is the duty of all progressive forces, in all countries, to take effective action to support their Namibian brothers in their hour of crisis and help bring to an end the rule of the South African racists as soon as possible.

January 1972.

POSTSCRIPT

Since the above was written, a number of events have taken place indicating that the crisis in Namibia is sharpening in intensity, that the South African Government is stepping up its repression, and that the turbulence has already spread beyond the borders to Angola.

26th January – The Minister of Bantu Administration, Mr.M.C.Botha, places an official ban on official press statements out of Ovamboland and says that troops are being sent to assist the police in the protection of 'international boundaries'. *Die Vaderland* reports that a full-scale insurrection is under way in Ovamboland. Over 120km. of fencing on the Angolan border have been destroyed.

27th January – Prime Minister Vorster says there is no crisis situation in Ovamboland and there is no ban on news from the territory.

28th January – Mr. H. Rothkegel, chairman of the labour committee of the South West Africa Agricultural Union, tells a farmers' meeting at Gobabis that the new wage levels would not be made public because there would be 'a fuss at the United Nations where everything we do is bad'. But he adds: 'No Ovambo will work for under R35 again.'

31st January – The *Rand Daily Mail* reports from Windhoek: 'The new contract system does nothing to change some of the worst features of the old system, and makes no provision for workers to have their families with them, which was one of the main demands of the strikers. Reports from Ovamboland seem to indicate it is not acceptable to a large body of the strikers.'

1st February – Ten people have been killed in clashes between the people and the police in the last 72 hours. 'The situation in the homeland is still extremely tense', says the *Rand Daily Mail.* The paper also reports newly recruited workers are demanding a minimum wage of R5 a day and are refusing to accept former conditions of accommodation and transport.

2nd February – The Anglican Bishop of Damaraland, the Rt. Rev. Colin O'Brien Winter, has his permit to visit Ovamboland withdrawn.

3rd February – The establishment of a legislative council for the Eastern Caprivi, with its seat at Ngwese, is gazetted in Pretoria. All 28 members of the council will be nominated.

4th February – Emergency regulations are promulgated in the *Government Gazette* similar to Proclamation 400 in the Transkei – public meetings are banned, any person can be detained in solitary confinement without trial, it is an offence to do or say anything likely to subvert the authority of the State, the Ovambo Government or any State officer. Road transport services to northern Ovamboland are suspended.

4th February – The United Nations Security Council meeting in Addis Ababa calls on South Africa to withdraw from South West Africa and instructs the Secretary General, Dr. Kurt Waldheim, to open talks with all parties concerned to establish conditions for the exercise of

self-determination and independence. Of the 15 members of the Security Council, only People's China withheld its support for the resolution.

8th February – The *Rand Daily Mail* reports: 'Growing trouble among the Ovambo tribesmen of South West Africa has spilled across the frontier into Southern Angola.' The Portuguese are said to be worried by reports of 'subversion and even terrorism' in the Cunene administrative district, where the Cunene dam, a joint Portuguese-South African project, is being built. 'If there is trouble on a major scale in Cunene it could be the work of Angolan 'liberation' movements operating in co-operation with the striking Ovambos to defeat the concentrated forces of both Portugal and South Africa straddling either side of the Cunene River frontier.'

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FROM AFRICA

In addition to the Parties listed in No. 47, Fourth Quarter 1971, the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party received warm messages of congratulation on the Party's fiftieth anniversary from the African Independence Party of Senegal and the Socialist Vanguard Party of Algeria.

CORRECTION

Francis Meli writes drawing attention to two minor errors in his article 'A Nation is Born' which appeared in our last issue. The number of African troops who went down in the wreck of the *Mendi* in 1917 was seven hundred, not seven thousand as stated (p. 24).

And in addition to J. Gumede and J. La Guma, also present from sub-Saharan Africa at the 1927 Brussels conference of the League against Imperialism were J. Colraine, a white trade unionist from South Africa and L. Senghor of Senegal.

AFRICA AND THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET

By A. Marinov

The relations of the European Economic Community with African countries are regulated by a number of agreements which have formulated the specific system of the African countries' association with the Common Market. These agreements include the Yaounde Convention on association with the 'six' of 18 Afro-Malagasi states* – former colonies of France, Belgium and Italy; the Arusha Convention which included into the 'Euroafrica' system the countries of the British Commonwealth – Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania; and an agreement on so-called partial association between the EEC, Morocco and Tunisia. The agreement between the Common Market and Nigeria, signed in 1966 in Lagos, has not been ratified and not come into force. Various forms of association with the Common Market involve 23 independent African states with a population adding up to over 120 million people.

The agreements between the EEC and Morocco and Tunisia, which came into force on September 1, 1969, make provision for the abolition of custom duties on most industrial goods produced by African states,

*Ivory Coast, Burundi, Upper Volta, Gabon, Dahomey, Congo, Malagasi Republic, Mali, Mauritania, Zaire, Niger, Ruanda, Senegal, Somalia, Togo, Central African Republic, Chad and Cameroon.

when exported to Common Market countries. Privilege terms are also granted for the import of olive oil, cereals and citrus fruits to the EEC. On their part Morocco and Tunisia under the pressure of the 'six' were forced to grant preferential terms for a number of industrial goods imported from Common Market countries.

The agreement between the Community, on the one hand, and Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, on the other, is broader from the viewpoint of the preferences granted. This convention which came into force on January 1, 1971, is based on preferential terms in trade between the two groups of countries. As for the 'six' the preferences are expressed in the abolition of custom duties on the goods imported from the three African countries, but within the range of certain contingents for coffee, clove and canned pineapples. After long haggling attended by outright pressure on the part of EEC bodies, the East African countries were confronted with the necessity of granting response preferences to the Common Market on almost 60 industrial goods.

The agreement between the 'six' and the countries of North Africa cover the sphere of foreign trade, and the EEC agreement with East African countries includes also clauses on right of settling, services, payments and capital. None of the three agreements touch upon issues of financial and technical assistance.

THE YAOUNDE CONVENTION

The Yaounde Convention stands apart among the agreements on association both from the viewpoint of terms of validity and from that of the nature of relations within the 'Euro-Africa' framework. Initially the terms of association with the Common Market for the 18 Afro-Malagasi states – then still colonies of West European countries – were formulated in a convention signed in 1957 simultaneously with the signing of the Rome Treaty which founded the European Economic Community. Later they were consolidated in two conventions signed in 1963 and 1969 in Yaounde (Cameroon). The second Yaounde Convention came into force on January 1, 1972. In accordance with the acting convention the following are the fundamental factors of association terms: the establishment of a free-trade zone within the 'Euro-Africa' framework and the establishment of an Economic Development Fund of association states.

It is obvious that the developing African countries are interested in preferential admittance to the Common Market since EEC countries consume the prevailing share of their overall export (about 80 per cent), particularly agricultural produce of tropical origin. However the preferential terms, though giving temporary advantages to associated countries, promote to a considerable extent the consolidation of the monocrop nature of their agriculture which is, as a rule, based on the production of one or two export products. According to the Commission of European Communities, nine associated countries get from the sale of one commodity 50 per cent of their export revenues, while four countries get more than 84 per cent. Fifteen commodities exported from 18 African countries to the Common Market (bananas, coffee, cocoa, oilseed cake, peanuts, peanut oil, palm oil, tropical tree wood, cotton, phosphates, iron ore, oil, copper, aluminium and cobalt) account for about 88 per cent of their total exports to the EEC. The system of preferences, artificially stimulating the production of raw materials and tropical farm produce, perpetuates the African countries' role of agrarian and raw material appendage of the industrially developed capitalist countries of Europe.

Moreover, the system of preferences which the associated countries enjoy on the Common Market is increasingly losing its significance to the 18 African countries for a number of reasons. This is promoted by the expansion of 'Euro-Africa' through the acceptance of new associated members (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Morocco, Tunisia and, in the future, Britain's joining the EEC, as well as the possible association of a number of countries of the British Commonwealth), the recent reduction of custom duties by the Common Market countries for cocoa, coffee and palm oil, introduction of a system of general preferences on the industrial goods imported to developed capitalist countries from the developing ones, etc. So, the system of 'Euro-African' preferences meets to an ever smaller extent the temporary economic interests of associated states, depriving them at the same time of clear-cut prospects for independent economic development.

It is important to bear in mind that the preferences are granted on reciprocal terms. And this means that African states, where long colonial rule of Western Europe resulted in so low a level of economic development that the per capita national income does not exceed 60-100 dollars a year, are forced to grant preferences to their former

'parent states' in which the respective indicator has come close to 2,000 dollars.

DEVELOPMENT INHIBITED

The principle of reciprocal preferences in trade between the big capitalist countries, on the one hand, and developing states, on the other, was repeatedly and sharply criticised at UN conferences on trade and development (UNCTAD). And that is well understandable because such 'reciprocity' in tariff disarmament does not only deprive the developing countries of substantial currency revenues from custom duties on goods imported from the EEC, but it also inhibits the development of processing industries in these countries, the output of which cannot compete with the manufactured goods exported from Europe. Free access to the African countries' market allows the monopolies of the 'six' to intensify their foreign-trade expansion and to sell on that market the goods which, due to high custom duties would be incapable of competing in other areas of the world.

Open custom frontiers within the 'Euro-African' framework are particularly advantageous to the imperialist countries in conditions when the gap in prices on industrial and raw food goods is steadily growing. The resultant 'price scissors' on export and import goods means that the associated countries, steadily enlarging their exports in kind, are deriving an ever smaller equivalent in terms of value. A memorandum addressed by associated countries to the EEC quotes the following data. In 1961 revenues from the export of a ton of cocoa allowed Cameroon to buy on the world market 2,700 metres of fabrics or 1,200 kg of cement, whereas in 1965 the same amount of cocoa exported gave the chance of importing only 800 metres of fabrics or 450 kg of cement. In the period from 1958 through 1965 the quantity of cement which Senegal could have purchased in exchange for a ton of peanuts diminished from 7 to 5.6 tons. This July, five leading cocoa exporting countries, three of which (Cameroon, Togo and Ivory Coast) are associated members of the EEC, had to stop the sale of this commodity because prices for cocoa on the world market came down by more than 40 per cent. Meanwhile the prices of industrial goods imported by associated countries are steadily rising. The result is that the purchasing power of associated states (excluding the Congo)

increased from 1962 to 1967 by only 25 per cent, while that of the developed capitalist countries increased by 38 per cent. If we bear in mind that the Common Market states are the basic consumers of tropical goods and raw materials exported by associated countries and the basic suppliers of industrial goods to these countries, we shall realise that the EEC is not only responsible for the unfavourable conditions forming on the world market for developing states, but that it derives direct advantages from that, as well.

The tax policy of Common Market countries is a serious handicap to the growth of the export of tropical goods from associated states. The FRG, Belgium and the Netherlands introduced back in 1959 home taxes on a number of traditional goods exported by associated countries. The Paris *Vie Francaise* published an interesting calculation to this effect: taxes on the consumption of but two such commodities as coffee and bananas give the state treasuries of these countries more than 200 million dollars a year. This means that in the course of two and a half years the three countries derived in taxes on the two commodities a sum which is equal to the fees of all six associated countriés to the European Development Fund in the course of five years. So, one hand takes twice as much as the other gives. The same form of non-tariff restrictions is employed in Italy and France. The level of taxes on some of the associated countries' tropical goods ranges in EEC countries from 60 to 250 per cent. In Italy, for instance, the tax on cocoa is 148 per cent, and in the FRG a 180 per cent tax has been fixed on coffee. High home taxes in EEC countries exert a negative effect on the level of the consumption of taxed goods, which in turn, exerts an adverse effect on the associated countries' exports.

RESULTS OF EEC ON TRADE

Such are the conditions in which foreign-trade relations within the 'Euro-Africa' framework are developing. What are the results of these relations?

The period from 1958 to 1962 (that of the validity of the first convention) is characterized by a reduction of foreign-trade turnover between EEC and associated countries. At the same time, the share of associated countries in the imports of EEC states came down from 5.7 to 4.3 per cent due to bounds of the community. In this way the first

Foreign Trade of EEC Countries With Associated African Countries

(in mln. dollars)

	1958	1962	1963	1969
Turnover	1,626	1,594	1,716	2,834
Imports	913	930	990	1,717
Exports	713	664	726	1,117
Deficit	200	266	264	600

Source: *Commerce Exterieur.* Statistique Mansuelle de la CEE, No. 6, 1970.

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convention on association failed to stimulate the development of trade between EEC and African countries.

From 1963 to 1969 (the period of the operation of the first Yaounde Convention) imports of the 'six' from associated countries increased by 73 per cent. This yields an annual increment on the level of 9.6 per cent. The balance of the EEC's trade with the group ot associated countries in 1969 showed a deficit of 600 million dollars. These are the data cited by official Common Market bodies when these try to prove the advantage to associated countries of foreign-trade relations in the Eurafrica system. But this is precisely the case where generalised showings conceal the actual state of affairs.

If we analyse the above data with due account of the special part played by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mauritania in EEC imports, then the situation will be quite different. These two countries accounted in the period under examination for 57 per cent of the Common Market import increment from associated states. In the export of the Congo Democratic Republic and Mauritania to the countries of the 'six' the predominant part is played by copper and iron ore respectively, i.e. the goods for which these countries are practically monopoly suppliers among associated states. The stably high demand for these goods on the part of EEC countries distorts the actual tendency in the Common Market's trade with associated countries which, more often than not, are suppliers of tropical agricultural goods. Without the Congo Democratic Republic and Mauritania the imports of EEC countries from associated states

increased from 1963 to 1969 by only 44 per cent and the annual respective increment comes to 6.2 per cent. This level is approximately equal to the annual increment of EEC imports from other developing countries, without taking oil and oil products into account. If we take all commodity groups, then the latter indicator for other developing countries will come to 8.1 per cent. So, the disappointment with the preference system, which has repeatedly been voiced by associated countries, is quite well founded.

The significant deficit which the Common Market's balance of trade with associated countries showed in 1969 is also easily explained if we bear in mind that the Congo Democratic Republic accounts for 56 per cent of the active balance of the African countries, which showed in their trade with the EEC an excess of exports over imports. Meanwhile the balance of trade of ten associated states showed in 1969 a deficit adding up to 150 million dollars.

It should also be pointed out that EEC countries import most intensively from associated states the raw materials which are in high demand in their capitalist industry. Copper, aluminium, oil, iron ore and timber account for about 30 per cent of the EEC's overall imports from 18 African countries. However many African states could have extended the export of agricultural goods of tropical origin. For most African countries agriculture is the main source of export revenues. However, for some of these goods (as applied to the period from 1958 through 1967) we observe an absolute diminution of the associated countries' exports to the EEC. Among these goods are coffee, peanuts, coconuts, cotton, palm oil, tobacco, rice etc. As applied to some tropical goods, we may see a reduction of the share of associated countries in the imports of the community which is increasingly orienting its purchases on the markets of outside countries. In the period from 1958 to 1967, the diminution of the share of associated countries in the imports of this type of goods in the EEC took place with reference to bananas by 7 per cent, coffee by 6.4 per cent, oil seed cake by 9.5 per cent, tobacco by 3 per cent, peanuts by 23 per cent, coconuts by 6.3 per cent, and cotton by 2 per cent.*

**Les Echenges commerciaux entre la CEE et les Etats africains et malgache associes, Bruxelles, 1969.*

So there are no grounds whatsoever to consider the preferential terms which associated countries enjoy on the market of the 'six' to be beneficial to their economy. If EEC countries do extend their purchases in African countries, they are motivated by their own requirements in scarce cheap raw materials, not the needs of the associated countries' economy.

In conditions when the struggle of nations and countries on the African continent for political and economic independence was gaining scope, the former parent states, together with political pressure, started to actively employ economic and financial instruments to keep their former colonies within the sphere of their influence. They banked on the economic backwardness of African countries and on their interest in the influx of capital for their economic development projects. With this purpose a special institute – European Development Fund (EDF) – was set up.*

Distribution of Allocations From EDF I and EDF II For Economic Sectors, As of January 1, 1970

(in mln dollars and in percentage)

	EDF I (1958-1963)		EDF II (1964-1969)	
	total allocations	share in total alloc.	total allocations	share in total alloc.
Farming	144	24.8	317	45.2
Infrastructure	256	44.0	248	35.4
Education	115	19.9	67	9.7
Public Health	51	8.8	29	4.0
Industry	4	0.7	24	3.5
Other Allocations	11	1.8	15	2.2
Total	581	100	700	100

Source: *Marches Tropicaux et Mediteranes,* No. 1262, 17/1, 1970.

*In accordance with the ordinals of the conventions under which the funds were organised, they are marked as EDF I, EDF II, EDF III.

The associated countries hoped to utilize the fund for diversifying their economy, raising their agricultural production, for industrialisation and for developing public health and education. However, the bulk of capital of the first fund was used by the Common Market for developing the infrastructure (chiefly road construction), i.e. for improving ultimately the conditions of exploiting the natural resources of associated countries by the monopolies of the 'six'.

The first fund allocated less than a quarter of its appropriations for the development of the associated countries' agriculture which was badly in need of financial aid. Subsidies to industry accounted for less than one per cent.

The results of the activities of the first fund could not satisfy the associated countries, the more so, that it was the states of western Europe that were entirely responsible for the grave economic situation which had formed in this part of the African continent in the period of colonialism. Under the pressure of the growing discontent of associated states the Common Market countries had to enlarge the capital of the second fund to 730 million dollars and, at the same time, to change somewhat the structure of allocations. For instance, the scope of subsidies for the development of agriculture was enlarged. However, this enlargement was effected chiefly at the expense of a more than 40 per cent reduction of allocations for education and public health. As for subsidies for the industrialisation of African countries, only 3.5 per cent were assigned for this purpose.

The level of subsidies granted by the European Development Fund is quite insufficient even to compensate for the losses which the associated countries suffer as a result of the fall of world prices for tropical goods. For instance, the losses of Ivory Coast due to the drop of prices on its export goods for which the Common Market countries are also responsible) in the period from 1961 to 1964 reached the sum of 240 million dollars. Meanwhile, the total 'aid' to this country from the European Development Fund added up to 58.7 million dollars.*

The subsidies of the third Economic Development Fund which started functioning as of January 1, 1971 adds up to 918 million dollars (without the sums allocated to overseas provinces and territories). However, if we bear in mind that the second Yaounde

**Afrique nouvelle,* Danak, 1967 No. 1017.

Convention, through the fault of Italy and the Netherlands, came into force with a six month delay and also that the term of the functioning of the new convention has been made longer than that of the foregoing one, we shall realise that the annual share of subsidies under EDF III for associated countries is bound to diminish. Meanwhile the share of credits granted by the European Investment Bank under the third fund is increasing, and the associated countries have to pay for that.

It is significant that under the third fund there are no special appropriations (though they had been stipulated in the foregoing agreement) for the gradual adjustment of the associated countries' economy to trade terms at world prices. Claiming this mechanism to be insufficient the EEC member states, instead of extending the scale of its application, have altogether refused to subsidise its operation thus putting the associated countries in complete dependence on the elements of the world market.

In contrast we may recall that the EEC spends annually about 3,000 million dollars for keeping up prices of the agricultural goods produced in Common Market countries at a level that is often 2-3 times higher than the world prices. Moreover, the integral agricultural policy of the 'six', based on the principle of self-provision with foodstuffs, exerts a negative effect on the growth of the export of such goods from associated countries.

AN INSTRUMENT OF MONOPOLY

The European Development Fund is quite a convenient instrument for boosting the economic expansion and for consolidating the position of the monopolies of the 'six' in Africa. The bulk of orders placed by the EDF is carried out by companies and firms of western Europe. By December 31, 1969 the EDF had placed orders to the sum total of 659 million dollars.* At the same time, the monopolies of Common Market countries received contracts for projects and delivery of equipment, the cost of which exceeds 497 million dollars. In the period of the operation of the first fund, the companies of the 'six' received 71 per cent of the sum total of orders placed, and in the period of the

*Here and further: *Revue du Marche commun,* No. 130, February 1970.

second fund this share came to 83 per cent.

The work involved in filling EDF orders is quite profitable for the monopolies of the 'six'. There is none of the risk connected with conventional investment activity, and the solvency of the customer is guaranteed. No wonder that competition for such orders is intensifying among Common Market countries. And, of course, in accordance with the laws of the capitalist market, it is the strongest that wins out in this struggle. Thus, the share of France in the sum total of projects carried out under the second fund has diminished, as compared with the foregoing period, from 46 to 39 per cent while the share of the FRG expanded from 5 to 23 per cent. Through economic intervention Western Germany is conquering the African continent, pushing aside its French partners in the community. In this struggle of industrially developed capitalist countries for markets and spheres of influence, it is the African countries that suffer the greatest losses. It is not just chance that the share of the associated countries' enterprises in filling the orders placed under the I and II funds came to only 29 and 17 per cent, respectively. So the allocations of the European Development Fund are used by Common Market countries actually for subsidising the economic and industrial expansion of their monopolies in African countries, thus damaging the industrialisation of associated states.

The application of the principles of the Yaounde Convention which grants the EEC countries the right of freely siting their companies on the territory of any associated country may also produce this kind of consequence. This preferential regime gives the monopolies of the 'six' not only the chance of processing tropical goods on the spot of their production and to sell finished goods on the Common Market without competition from outsiders, but also to control the national industries of associated states.

Some clauses of the Yaounde Convention infringe upon the political independence of African countries. Clause 15, for instance, forces the associated countries to consult within the framework of the Association Council on questions of trade policy with reference to the countries that are not members of the convention. The form which under certain circumstances such 'consultations' may acquire is illustrated by a declaration of the FRG Government made in 1962 which conditioned the signing of the Yaounde Convention by Western Germany by the

request that associated states should refuse to recognise the German Democratic Republic. The clause on consultations is a direct encroachment upon the sovereignty of African states and pursues the aim of putting not only the trade policy but also the foreign policy of associated countries under the control of the 'six'.

Attention may be drawn also to the fact that in an appendix to the Yaounde Convention there is a declaration of the West German Government which stipulates that the convention on association applies also to West Berlin . . . Berlin is known to have never been FRG territory, and this kind of declaration can be appraised as nothing but an attempt of certain West German circles at using the mechanism of 'Euro-African' association as an instrument of hostile policy towards the GDR and other socialist countries.

Summing up, we may state that the system of association, while creating an illusion of temporary advantages to African countries, is actually directed at keeping African states in the orbit of the expansionist trade, industrial and financial policy of the imperialist states of Western Europe. The monopolies of the 'six' derive immediate and steadily growing advantages within the 'Euro-African' network, while the associated states play the role of the agrarian raw-material base of developed capitalist countries. The Nigerian *Morning Post* wrote that the establishment of the Common Market had allowed West European countries not only to bind newly-independent states, but also had given the 'six' the chance of keeping them, at least temporarily, in the status of suppliers of raw materials and foodstuffs. The newspaper stated that Africans had no doubts now that the EEC could be more harmful than beneficial to the developing countries' economy.

Resorting to economic levers the Common Market countries are trying to affect the foreign policies of independent African countries, striving to keep them in the fairwater of the policy of the countries of the community which is the economic base of the aggressive NATO bloc.

So, the association is actually a form of the Common Market countries' collective neo-colonialism on the African continent, adjusted to the present conditions.

BRITAIN'S ENTRY

However, the imperialist states are trying to not only retain, but also to strengthen their position in this part of the world. For instance, among the important aspects examined at the round of talks on Britain's joining the EEC, which finished on June 23 in Luxembourg, there was the problem of the African member countries of the British Commonwealth. The partners in the talks came in principle to the agreement that this group of African countries would be granted the possibility of associating with the extended community in the form which had developed at present within the framework of the Yaounde or Arusha conventions.

With due account of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania which are already associated with the Common Market, the number of African member states of the British Commonwealth may increase in the future system of 'Euro-Africa' to ten. Meanwhile, more than 30 African states may be involved in all sorts of associations and preferential agreements with the European Economic Community beginning from 1975 — this term being stipulated for the renewal and signing new agreements on association.

The attainment of mutual understanding between Britain and the EEC on the issue of the association of African countries was promoted by the partners' aspiration not only to retain their spheres of influence in Africa, but also to extend them at the expense of the countries which had earlier maintained special relations with but one of the partners concerned. For the 'six', once the member countries of the British Commonwealth have joined the 'Euro-Africa' system, the African market will grow by more than 80 million consumers. The zone of preferential economic relations between Britain and African countries will expand still more.

COLLECTIVE NEO-COLONIALISM

So, the system of confined zones of influence is being replaced by a steadily expanding system of collective neo-colonialism, where favourable conditions will be created for consolidating the imperialist states' policy towards the developing countries.

Neither can we deny the fact that the system of 'Euro-African'

association is of a discriminating nature with reference to outside states and, first and foremost, the developing countries that are not associated with the EEC. The Common Market is a major importer of tropical products, and the position of EEC member states on markets exerts an important effect on the general conditions of these goods on world markets. With the exception of France all EEC countries have till now been meeting the bulk of their requirements for tropical goods by imports from non-associated countries. Under these conditions the states that are not bound to the Common Market by the association regime are naturally anxious lest the system of preferences will lead to changes in traditional trends in the trade in goods of tropical origin. On the grounds of the necessity of observing preferential terms towards associated states, the EEC countries are introducing customs duties on the goods of other developing countries, as has been done by Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg in 1964 with reference to coffee and cocoa beans. On the other hand, in accordance with their commitments to grant preferences to EEC member countries, the associated countries are in some cases forced to intensify discrimination against outside states on their markets. For instance, in 1962 the countries in the Equatorial customs alliance – Gabon, Cameroon, the Congo People's Republic, the Central African Republic and Chad – gave up the 'open door' policy and introduced a unified customs tariff with high duties which, however, did not apply to imports from EEC countries. The preferences which EEC countries enjoy on the Moroccan Market contradict the principles of the Algeciras Treaty (1906) which proclaimed the 'open door' regime in Morocco.

The difference of interests of various groups of developing countries to be observed at the present stage of their economic development, is taken advantage of by Common Market countries for implementing their neo-colonialist plans. On the one hand they make the mechanism of preferences and financial 'aid' a bait which is capable of drawing new members into the 'Euro-African' trap. On the other, they try to pursue through the system of association a policy aimed at aggravating friction and conflicts among the countries of the third world. In these conditions the developing countries must clearly realise that the outcome of struggle for their true political and economic independence depends largely on their unity founded on an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist basis.

The Black Woman In Slavery

by Angela Davis

INTRODUCTION

I was immensely pleased to learn of THE BLACK SCHOLAR'S plans to devote an entire issue to the black woman.

The paucity of literature on the black woman is outrageous on its face. But we must also contend with the fact that too many of these rare studies must claim as their signal achievement the reinforcement of fictitious cliches. They have given credence to grossly distorted categories through which the black woman continues to be perceived. In the words of Nathan and Julia Hare, ' . . .she has been labelled "aggressive" or "matriarchal" by white scholars and "castrating female" by [some] blacks.' (*Transaction*, Nov-Dec 1970). Many have recently sought to remedy this situation. But for the time being, at least, we are still confronted with these reified images of ourselves. And for now, we must still assume the responsibility of shattering them.

Initially, I did not envision this paper as strictly confined to the era of slavery. Yet, as I began to think through the issue of the black matriarch, I came to the conclusion that it had to be refuted at its presumed historical inception.

The chief problem I encountered stemmed from the conditions of my incarceration: opportunities for researching the issue I wanted to explore were extremely limited. I chose, therefore, to entitle this piece 'Reflections . . .' It does not pretend to be more than a collection of ideas which would constitute a starting point – a framework within which to conduct a rigorous reinvestigation of the black woman as she interacted with her people and with her oppressive environment during slavery.

I would like to dedicate these reflections to one of the most admirable black leaders to emerge from the ranks of our liberation movement – to George Jackson, whom I loved and respected in every way. As I came to know and love him, I saw him developing an acute sensitivity to the real problems facing black women and thus refining his ability to distinguish these from their mythical transpositions. George was uniquely aware of the need to extricate himself and other black men from the remnants of divisive and destructive myths purporting to represent the black woman. If his life had not been so precipitously and savagely extinguished, he would have surely accomplished a task he had already outlined some time ago: a systematic critique of his past misconceptions about black women and of their roots in the ideology of the established order. He wanted to appeal to other black men, still similarly disoriented, to likewise correct themselves through self-criticism. George viewed this obligation as a revolutionary duty, but also, and equally important, as an expression of his boundless love for all black women.

THE MYTH OF MATRIARCHY

The matriarchal black woman has been repeatedly invoked as one of the fatal by-products of slavery. When the Moynihan Report consecrated this myth with Washington's stamp of approval, its spurious content and propagandistic mission should have become apparent. Yet even outside the established ideological apparatus, and also among black people, unfortunate references to the matriarchate can still be encountered. Occasionally, there is even acknowledgement of the "tangle of pathology" it supposedly engendered. (This black matriarchate, according to Moynihan *et al.* defines the roots of our oppression as a people.) An accurate portrait of the African woman in bondage must debunk the myth of the matriarchate. Such a portrait must simultaneously attempt to illuminate the historical matrix of her oppression and must evoke her varied, often heroic, responses to the slaveholder's domination.

Lingering beneath the notion of the black matriarch is an unspoken indictment of our female forebears as having actively assented to slavery. The notorious cliche, the 'emasculating female', has its roots in the fallacious inference that in playing a central part in the slave family, the black woman related to the slaveholding class as collaborator. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the most fundamental sense, the slave system did not – and could not – engender and recognise a matriarchal family structure. Inherent in the very concept of the matriarchy is 'power'. It would have been exceedingly risky for the slaveholding class to openly acknowledge symbols of authority – female symbols no less than male. Such legitimised concentrations of authority might eventually unleash their 'power' against the slave system itself.

The American brand of slavery strove toward a rigidified disorganisation in family life, just as it had to proscribe all potential social structures within which black people might forge a collective and conscious existence.* Mothers and fathers were brutally separated; children, when they became of age, were branded and frequently severed from their mothers. That the mother was 'the only legitimate parent of her child' did not therefore mean that she was even permitted to guide it to maturity.

Those who lived under a common roof were often unrelated through blood. Frederick Douglass, for instance, had no recollection of his father. He only vaguely recalled having seen his mother – and then on extremely rare occasions. Moreover, at the age of seven, he was forced to abandon the dwelling of his grandmother, of whom he would later say: 'She was to me a mother and a father'.[1] The strong personal bonds between immediate family members which oftentimes persisted despite coerced separation bore witness to the remarkable capacity of black people for resisting the disorder so violently imposed on their lives.

Where families were allowed to thrive, they were, for the most part, external fabrications serving the designs of an avaricious, profit-seeking slaveholder.

> The strong hand of the slave owner dominated the Negro family, which existed at his mercy and often at his own personal instigation. An ex-slave has told of getting married on one plantation: 'When you married you had to jump over a broom three times.'[2]

This slave went on to describe the various ways in which his master coupled men and women with the aim of producing the maximum number of healthy child-slaves. In the words of John Henrik Clarke,

> The family as a functional entity was outlawed and permitted to exist only when it benefited the slave-master. Maintenance of the slave family unit benefited the slave owners only when, and to the extent that such unions created new slaves who could be exploited.[3] .

The designation of the black woman as a matriarch is a cruel misnomer. It is a misnomer because it implies stable kinship structures

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It is interesting to note a parallel in Nazi Germany: with all its ranting and raving about motherhood and the family, Hitler's regime made a conscious attempt to strip the family of virtually all its social functions. The thrust of their unspoken programme for the family was to reduce it to a biological unit and to force its members to relate in an unmediated fashion to the fascist bureaucracy. Clearly the Nazis endeavoured to crush the family in order to ensure that it could not become a centre from which oppositional activity might originate.

within which the mother exercises decisive authority. It is cruel because it ignores the profound traumas the black woman must have experienced when she had to surrender her child-bearing to alien and predatory economic interests.

Even the broadest construction of the matriarch concept would not render it applicable to the black slave woman. But it should not be inferred that she therefore played no significant role in the community of slaves. Her indispensable efforts to ensure the survival of her people can hardly be contested. Even if she had done no more, her deeds would still be laudable. But her concern and struggles for physical survival, while clearly important, did not constitute her most outstanding contributions. It will be submitted that by virtue of the brutal force of circumstances, the black woman was assigned the mission of promoting the consciousness and practice of resistance. A great deal has been said about the black *man* and resistance, but very little about the unique relationship black women bore to the resistance struggles during slavery. To understand the part she played in developing and sharpening the thrust towards freedom, the broader meaning of slavery and of American slavery in particular must be explored.

NATURE OF AMERICAN SLAVERY

Slavery is an ancient human institution. Of slave labour in its traditional form and of serfdom as well, Karl Marx had the following to say:

> The slave stands in absolutely no relation to the objective conditions of his labour; it is rather the labour itself, in the form of the slave as of the serf, which is placed in the category of inorganic condition of production alongside the other natural beings, e.g. cattle, or regarded as an appendage of the earth.[4]

The bondsman's existence as a natural condition of production is complemented and reinforced, according to Marx, by his membership in a social grouping which he perceives to be an extension of nature. Enmeshed in what appears to be a natural state of affairs, the attitude of the slave, to a greater or lesser degree, would be an acquiescence in his subjugation. Engels points out that in Athens, the state could depend on a police force consisting entirely of slaves.[5]

The fabric of American slavery differed significantly from ancient slavery and feudalism. True, black people were forced to act as if they were 'inorganic conditions of production'. For slavery was 'personality swallowed up in the sordid idea of property – manhood lost in chattelhood'.[6] But there were no pre-existent social structures or cultural dictates which might induce reconciliation to the circumstances of their bondage. On the contrary, Africans had been uprooted from their natural environment, their social relations, their culture. No legitimate socio-cultural surroundings would be permitted to

develop and flourish, for, in all likelihood, they would be utterly incompatible with the demands of slavery.

Yet another fact would militate against harmony and equilibrium in the slave's relation to his bondage: slavery was enclosed in a society otherwise characterized by 'free' wage-labour. Black men and women could always contrast their chains with the nominally free status of white working people. This was quite literally true in such cases where, like Frederick Douglass, they were contracted out as wage-labourers. Unlike the 'free' white men alongside whom they worked, they had no right to the meagre wages they earned. Such were some of the many contradictions unloosed by the effort to forcibly inject slavery into the early stages of American capitalism.

The combination of a historically superceded slave labour system based almost exclusively on race and the drive to strip black people of all their social and cultural bonds would create a fateful rupture at the heart of the slave system itself. The slaves would not readily adopt fatalistic attitudes towards the conditions surrounding and ensnaring their lives. They were a people who had been violently thrust into a patently 'unnatural' subjugation. If the slaveholders had not maintained an absolute monopoly of violence, if they had not been able to rely on large numbers of their fellow white men – indeed the entire ruling class as well as misled working people – to assist them in their terrorist machinations, slavery would have been far less feasible than it actually proved to be.

The magnitude and effects of the black people's defiant rejection of slavery has not yet been fully documented and illuminated. But there is more than ample evidence that they consistently refused to succumb to the all-encompassing dehumanisation objectively demanded by the slave system. Comparatively recent studies have demonstrated that the few slave uprisings – too spectacular to be relegated to oblivion by the racism of ruling class historians – were not isolated occurrences, as the latter would have had us believe. The reality, we know now, was that these open rebellions erupted with such a frequency that they were as much a part of the texture of slavery as the conditions of servitude themselves. And these revolts were only the tip of an iceberg: resistance expressed itself in other grand modes and also in the seemingly trivial forms of feigned illness and studied indolence.

If resistance was an organic ingredient of slave life, it had to be directly nurtured by the social organisation which the slaves themselves improvised. The consciousness of their oppression, the conscious thrust towards its abolition could not have been sustained without impetus from the community they pulled together through the sheer force of their own strength. Of necessity, this community would revolve around the realm which was furthermost removed from the immediate arena of domination. It could only be located in and around the living quarters, the area where the basic needs of physical life were met.

In the area of production, the slaves – pressed into the mould of beasts of burden – were forcibly deprived of their humanity. (And a human being thoroughly dehumanised, has no desire for freedom.) But the community gravitating around the domestic quarters might possibly permit a retrieval of the man and the woman in their fundamental humanity. We can assume that in a very real material sense, it was only in domestic life – away from the eyes and whip of the overseer – that the slaves could attempt to assert the modicum of freedom they still retained. It was only there that they might be inspired to project techniques of expanding it further by levelling what few weapons they had against the slaveholding class whose unmitigated drive for profit was the source of their misery.

Via this path, we return to the African slave woman: in the living quarters, the major responsibilities 'naturally' fell to her. It was the woman who was charged with keeping the 'home' in order. This role was dictated by the male supremacist ideology of white society in America; it was also woven into the patriarchal traditions of Africa. As her biological destiny, the woman bore the fruits of procreation; as her social destiny, she cooked, sewed, washed, cleaned house, raised the children. Traditionally the labour of females, domestic work is supposed to complement and confirm their inferiority.

But with the black slave woman, there is a strange twist of affairs: in the infinite anguish of ministering to the needs of the men and children around her (who were not necessarily members of her immediate family), she was performing the only labour of the slave community which could not be directly and immediately claimed by the oppressor. There was no compensation for work in the fields; it served no useful purpose for the slaves. Domestic labour was the only meaningful labour for the slave community as a whole (discounting as negligible the exceptional situations where slaves received some pay for their work).

Precisely through performing the drudgery which has long been a central expression of the socially conditioned inferiority of women, the black woman in chains could help to lay the foundation for some degree of autonomy, both for herself and her men. Even as she was suffering under her unique oppression as female, she was thrust by the force of circumstances into the centre of the slave community. She was, therefore, essential to the survival of the community. Not all people have survived enslavement; hence her survival-oriented activities were themselves a form of resistance. Survival, moreover, was the prerequisite of all higher levels of struggle.

But much more remains to be said of the black woman during slavery. The dialectics of her oppression will become far more complex. It is true that she was a victim of the myth that only the woman, with her diminished capacity for mental and physical labour, should do degrading household work. Yet the alleged benefits of the ideology of feminity did not accrue to her. She was not sheltered or protected:

she would not remain oblivious to the desperate struggle for existence unfolding outside the 'home'. She was also there in the fields, alongside the man, toiling under the lash from sun-up to sun-down.

THE 'EQUALITY' OF SLAVES

This was one of the supreme ironies of slavery: in order to approach its strategic goal – to extract the greatest possible surplus from the labour of the slaves – the black woman had to be released from the chains of the myth of feminity. In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois, '... our women in black had freedom contemptuously thrust upon them.' In order to function as slave, the black woman had to be annulled as woman, that is, as woman in her historical stance of wardship under the entire male hierarchy. The sheer force of things rendered her equal to her man.

Excepting the woman's role as caretaker of the household, male supremacist structures could not become deeply embedded in the internal workings of the slave system. Though the ruling class was male and rabidly chauvinistic, the slave system could not confer upon the black man the appearance of a privileged position vis-a-vis the black woman. The man-slave could not be the unquestioned superior within the 'family' or community, for there was no such thing as the 'family provided' among the slaves. The attainment of slavery's intrinsic goals was contingent upon the fullest and most brutal utilisation of the productive capacities of every man, woman and child. They all had to 'provide' for the master. The black woman was therefore wholly integrated into the productive force.

> The bell rings at four o'clock in the morning and they have half an hour to get ready. Men and women start together, and the women must work as steadily as the men and perform the same tasks as the men. [8]

Even in the posture of motherhood – otherwise the occasion for hypocritical adoration – the black woman was treated with not greater compassion and with no less severity than her man. As one slave related in a narrative of his life:

> ... women who had sucking children suffered much from their breasts becoming full of milk, the infants being left at home; they therefore could not keep up with the other hands: I have seen the overseer beat them with raw hide so that the blood and the milk flew mingled from their breasts. [9]

Moses Grandy, ex-slave, continues his description with an account of a typical form of field punishment reserved for the black woman with child:

> She is compelled to lie down over a hole made to receive her corpulency, and is flogged with the whip, or beat with a paddle, which has holes in it; at every stroke comes a blister. [10]

The unbridled cruelty of this levelling process whereby the black woman was forced into equality with the black man requires no further explanation. She shared in the deformed equality of equal oppression.

But out of this deformed equality was forged quite undeliberately, yet inexorably, a state of affairs which could unharness an immense potential in the black woman. Expending indispensable labour for the enrichment of her oppressor, she could attain a practical awareness of the oppressor's utter dependence on her – for the master needs the slave far more than the slave needs the master. At the same time she could realise that while her productive activity was wholly subordinated to the will of the master, it was nevertheless proof of her ability to transform things. For 'labour is the living, shaping fire; it represents the impermanence of things, their temporality . . .'[11]

The black woman's consciousness of the oppression suffered by her people was honed in the bestial realities of daily experience. It would not be the stunted awareness of a woman confined to the home. She would be prepared to ascend to the same levels of resistance which were accessible to her men. Even as she performed her housework, the black woman's role in the slave community could not be identical to the historically evolved female role. Stripped of the palliative feminine veneer which might have encouraged a passive performance of domestic tasks, she was now uniquely capable of weaving into the warp and woof of domestic life a profound consciousness of resistance.

With the contributions of strong black women, the slave community as a whole could achieve heights unscaleable within the families of the white oppressed or even within the patriarchal kinship groups of Africa. Latently or actively it was always a community of resistance. It frequently erupted in insurgency, but was daily animated by the minor acts of sabotage which harassed the slave master to no end. Had the black woman failed to rise to the occasion, the community of slaves could not have fully developed in this direction. The slave system would have to deal with the black woman as the custodian of a house of resistance.

The oppression of black women during the era of slavery, therefore, had to be buttressed by a level of overt ruling-class repression. Her routine oppression had to assume an unconcealed dimension of outright counter-insurgency.

WOMEN AND REBELLION

To say that the oppression of black slave women necessarily incorporated open forms of counter-insurgency is not as extravagant as it might initially appear. The penetration of counter-insurgency into the day to day routine of the slave master's domination will be considered towards the end of this paper. First, the participation of black women in the overt and explosive upheavals which constantly rocked the slave

system must be confirmed. This will be an indication of the magnitude of her role as caretaker of a household of resistance – of the degree to which she could concretely encourage those around her to keep their eyes on freedom. It will also confirm the objective circumstances to which the slave master's counter-insurgency was a response.

With the sole exception of Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, black women of the slave era remain more or less enshrouded in unrevealed history. And, as Earl Conrad has demonstrated, even 'General Tubman's' role has been consistently and grossly minimised. She was a far greater warrior against slavery than is suggested by the prevalent misconception that her only outstanding contribution was to make nineteen trips into the South, bringing over 300 slaves to their freedom.

> [She] was head of the Intelligence Service in the Department of the South throughout the Civil War; she is the only American woman to lead troops black and white on the field of battle, as she did in the Department of the South ... She was a compelling and stirring orator in the councils of the abolitionists and the anti-slaves, a favourite of the antislavery conferences. She was the fellow planner with Douglass, Martin Delany, Wendell Phillips, Gerrit Smith and other leaders of the anti-slavery movement.[12]

No extensive and systematic study of the role of black women in resisting slavery has come to my attention. It has been noted that large numbers of freed black women worked towards the purchase of their relatives' and friends' freedom. About the participation of women in both the well-known and more obscure slave revolts, only casual remarks have been made. It has been observed, for instance, that Gabriel's wife was active in planning the rebellion spearheaded by her husband, but little else has been said about her.

The sketch which follows is based in its entirety on the works of Herbert Aptheker, the only resources available to me at the time of this writing.[13] These facts, gleaned from Aptheker's works on slave revolts and other forms of resistance, should signal the urgency to undertake a thorough study of the black woman as anti-slavery rebel. In 1971 this work is far overdue.

Aptheker's research has disclosed the widespread existence of communities of blacks who were neither free nor in bondage. Throughout the South (in South and North Carolina, Virginia, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama), maroon communities consisting of fugitive slaves and their descendants were 'an ever present feature' – from 1642 to 1864 – of slavery. They provided '... havens for fugitives, served as bases for marauding expeditions against nearby plantations and, at times, supplied leadership to planned uprisings.'[14]

Every detail of these communities was invariably determined by and steeped in resistance, for their raison d'etre emanated from their

perpetual assault on slavery. Only in a fighting stance could the maroons hope to secure their constantly imperilled freedom. As a matter of necessity, the women of those communities were compelled to define themselves – no less than the men – through their many acts of resistance. Hence, throughout this brief survey the counter-attacks and heroic efforts at defence assisted by maroon women will be a recurring motif.

As it will be seen, black women often poisoned the food and set fire to the houses of their masters. For those who were also employed as domestics these particular overt forms of resistance were especially available.

The vast majority of the incidents to be related involve either tactically unsuccessful assaults or eventually thwarted attempts at defence. In all likelihood, numerous successes were achieved, even against the formidable obstacles posed by the slave system. Many of these were probably unpublicised even at the time of their occurrence, lest they provide encouragement to the rebellious proclivities of other slaves and, for other slaveholders, an occasion for fear and despair.

During the early years of the slave era (1708) a rebellion broke out in New York. Among its participants were surely many women, for one, along with three men, was executed in retaliation for the killing of seven whites. It may not be entirely insignificant that while the men were hanged, she was heinously burned alive.[15] In the same colony, women played an active role in a 1712 uprising in the course of which slaves, with their guns, clubs and knives, killed members of the slaveholding class and managed to wound others. While some of the insurgents – among them a pregnant woman – were captured, others – including a woman – committed suicide rather than surrender.[16]

In New Orleans one day in 1730 a woman slave received 'a violent blow from a French soldier for refusing to obey him' and in her anger shouted 'that the French should not long insult Negroes'.[17] As it was later disclosed, she and undboutedly many other women, had joined in a vast plan to destroy slaveholders. Along with eight men, this dauntless woman was executed. Two years later, Louisiana pronounced a woman and four men leaders of a planned rebellion. They were all executed and, in a typically savage gesture, their heads publicly displayed on poles.[18]

Charleston, South Carolina condemned a black woman to die in 1740 for arson,[19] a form of sabotage, as earlier noted, frequently carried out by women. In Maryland, for instance, a slave woman was executed in 1776 for having destroyed by fire her master's house, his outhouses and tobacco house.[20]

In the thick of the Colonies' war with England, a group of defiant slave women and men were arrested in Saint Andrew's Parish, Georgia in 1774. But before they were captured, they had already brought a number of slave owners to their death.[21]

The maroon communities have been briefly described; from 1782 to 1784, Louisiana was a constant target of maroon attacks. When twenty-five of this community's members were finally taken prisoner, men and women alike were all severely punished.[22]

As can be inferred from previous example, the North did not escape the tremendous impact of fighting black women. In Albany, New York, two women were among three slaves executed for anti-slavery activities in 1794.[23] The respect and admiration accorded the black woman fighter by her people is strikingly illustrated by an incident which transpired in York, Pennsylvania: when, during the early months of 1803, Margaret Bradley was convicted of attempting to poison two white people, the black inhabitants of the area revolted en masse.

> They made several attempts to destroy the town by fire and succeeded, within a period of three weeks, in burning eleven buildings. Patrols were established, strong guards set up, the militia dispatched to the scene of the unrest . . . and a reward of three hundred dollars offered for the capture of the insurrectionists.[24]

A successful elimination by poisoning of several 'of our respectable men' (said a letter to the governor of North Carolina) was met by the execution of four or five slaves. One was a woman who was burned alive.[25] In 1810, two women and a man were accused of arson in Virginia.[26]

In 1811 North Carolina was the scene of a confrontation between a maroon community and a slave-catching posse. Local newspapers reported that its members 'had bid defiance to any force whatever and were resolved to stand their ground.' Of the entire community two were killed, one wounded and two – both women – were captured.[27]

Aptheker's *Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States* contains a portion of the transcript of an 1812 confession of a slave rebel in Virginia. The latter divulged the information that a black woman brought him into a plan to kill their master and that yet another black woman had been charged with concealing him after the killing occurred.[28]

In 1816 it was discovered a community of three hundred escaped slaves – men, women, children – had occupied a fort in Florida. After the U.S. Army was dispatched with instructions to destroy the community, a ten day siege terminated with all but forty of the three hundred dead. All the slaves fought to the very end.[29] In the course of a similar, though smaller confrontation between maroons and a militia group (in South Carolina, 1826), a woman and a child were killed.[30] Still another maroon community was attacked in Mobile, Alabama in 1837. Its inhabitants, men and women alike, resisted fiercely – according to local newspapers, 'fighting like Spartans.'[31]

Convicted of having been among those who, in 1829, had been the cause of a devastating fire in Augusta, Georgia, a black woman was 'executed, dissected, and exposed' (according to an English visitor). Moreover, the execution of yet another woman, about to give birth, was imminent.[32] During the same year, a group of slaves, being led from Maryland to be sold in the South, had apparently planned to kill the traders and make their way to freedom. One of the traders was successfully done away with, but eventually a posse captured all the slaves. Of the six leaders sentenced to death, one was a woman. She was first permitted, for reasons of economy, to give birth to her child.[33] Afterwards, she was publicly hanged.

The slave class in Louisiana, as noted earlier, was not unaware of the formidable threat posed by the black woman who chose to fight. It responded accordingly: in 1846 a posse of slave owners ambushed a community of maroons, killing one woman and wounding two others. A black man was also assassinated.[34] Neither could the border states escape the recognition that slave women were eager to battle for their freedom. In 1850 in the state of Missouri, 'about thirty slaves, men and women, of four different owners, had armed themselves with knives, clubs and three guns and set out for a free state.' Their pursuers, who could unleash a far more powerful violence than they, eventually thwarted their plans.[35]

This factual survey of but a few of the open acts of resistance in which black women played major roles will close with two further events. When a maroon camp in Mississippi was destroyed in 1857, four of its members did not manage to elude capture, one of whom was a fugitive slave woman.[36] All of them, women as well as men, must have waged a valiant fight. Finally, there occurred in October, 1862 a skirmish between maroons and a scouting party of Confederate soldiers in the state of Virginia.[37] This time, however, the maroons were the victors and it may well have been that some of the many women helped to put the soldiers to death.

The oppression of slave women had to assume dimensions of open counter-insurgency. Against the background of the facts presented above, it would be difficult indeed to refute this contention. As for those who engaged in open battle, they were no less ruthlessly punished than slave men. It would even appear that in many cases they may have suffered penalties which were more excessive than those meted out to the men. On occasion, when men were hanged, the women were burned alive. If such practices were widespread, their logic would be clear. They would be terrorist methods designed to dissuade other black women from following the examples of their fighting sisters. If all black women rose up alongside their men, the institution of slavery would be in difficult straits.

It is against the backdrop of her role as fighter that the routine oppression of the slave woman must be explored once more. If she was burned, hanged, broken on the wheel, her head paraded on poles before her oppressed brothers and sisters, she must have also felt the edge of this counter-insurgency as a fact of her daily existence. The slave system would not only have to make conscious efforts to stifle the tendencies towards acts of the kind described above; it would be no less necessary to stave off escape attempts (escapes to maroon country!) and all the various forms of sabotage within the system. Feigning illness was also resistance as were work slowdowns and actions destructive to the crops. The more extensive these acts, the more the slaveholder's profits would tend to diminish.

While a detailed study of the myriad modes in which this counter-insurgency was manifested can and should be conducted, the following reflections will focus on a single aspect of the slave woman's oppression, particularly prominent in its brutality.

RAPE : A FORM OF TERRORISM

Much has been said about the sexual abuses to which the black woman was forced to submit. They are generally explained as an outgrowth of the male supremacy of Southern culture: the purity of white womanhood could not be violated by the aggressive sexual activity desired by the white male. His instinctual urges would find expression in his relationships with his property – the black slave woman, who would have to become his unwilling concubine. No doubt there is an element of truth in these statements, but it is equally important to unearth the meaning of these sexual abuses from the vantage point of the woman who was assaulted.

In keeping with the theme of these reflections, it will be submitted that the slave master's sexual domination of the black woman contained an unveiled element of counter-insurgency. To understand the basis for this assertion, the dialectical moments of the slave woman's oppression must be restated and their movement recaptured. The prime factor, it has been said, was the total and violent expropriation of her labour with no compensation save the pittance necessary for bare existence.

Secondly, as female, she was the housekeeper of the living quarters. In this sense, she was already doubly oppressed. However, having been wrested from passive, 'feminine' existence by the sheer force of things – literally by forced labour – confining domestic tasks were incommensurable with what she had become. That is to say, by virtue of her participation in production, she would not act the part of the passive female, but could experience the same need as her men to challenge the conditions of her subjugation. As the centre of domestic life, the only life at all removed from the arena of exploitation, and

thus as an important source of survival, the black woman could play a pivotal role in nurturing the thrust towards freedom.

The slave master would attempt to thwart this process. He knew that as female, this slave woman could be particularly vulnerable in her sexual existence. Although he would not pet her and deck her out in frills, the white master could endeavour to reestablish her femaleness by reducing her to the level of her *biological* being. Aspiring with his sexual assaults to establish her as a female *animal*, he would be striving to destroy her proclivities towards resistance. Of the sexual relations of animals, taken at their abstract biological level (and not in terms of their quite different social potential for human beings), Simone de Beauvoir says the following:

> It is unquestionably the male who takes the female – she is taken. Often the word applied literally, for whether by means of special organs or superior strength, the male seizes her and holds her in place; he performs the copulatory movements; and, among insects, birds, and mammals, he penetrates . . . Her body becomes a resistance to be broken through . . .[38]

The act of copulation, reduced by the white man to an animal-like act, would be symbolic of the effort to conquer the resistance the black woman could unloose.

In confronting the black woman as adversary in a sexual contest, the master would be subjecting her to the most elemental form of terrorism distinctively suited for the female: rape. Given the already terroristic texture of plantation life, it would be as potential victim of rape that the slave woman would be most unguarded. Further, she might be most conveniently manipulable if the master contrived a ransom system of sorts, forcing her to pay with her body for food, diminished severity in treatment, the safety of her children etc.

The integration of rape into the sparsely furnished legitimate social life of the slaves harks back to the feudal 'right of the first night', the *jus primae noctis.* The feudal lord manifested and reinforced his domination over the serfs by asserting his authority to have sexual intercourse with all the females. The right itself referred specifically to all freshly married women. But while the right to the first night eventually evolved into the institutionalised 'virgin tax',[39] the American slaveholder's sexual domination never lost its openly terroristic character.

As a direct attack on the black female as potential insurgent, this sexual repression finds its parallels in virtually every historical situation where the woman actively challenges oppression. Thus, Franz Fanon could say of the Algerian woman: 'A woman led away by soldiers who comes back a week later – it is not necessary to question her to understand that she has been violated dozens of times.'[40]

In its political contours, the rape of the black woman was not exclusively an attack upon her. Indirectly, its target was also the slave community as a whole. In launching the sexual war on the woman, the master would not only assert his sovereignty over a critically important figure of the slave community, he would also be aiming a blow against the black man. The latter's instinct to protect his female relations and comrades (now stripped of its male supremacist implications) would be frustrated and violated to the extreme. Placing the white male's sexual barbarity in bold relief, Du Bois cries out in a rhetorical vein:

> I shall forgive the South much in its final judgement day: I shall forgive its slavery, for slavery is a world-old habit; I shall forgive its fighting for a well-lost cause, and for remembering that struggle with tender tears; I shall forgive its so-called 'pride of race,' the passion of its hot blood, and even its dear, old, laughable strutting and posing; but one thing I shall never forgive, neither in this world nor the world to come: its wanton and continued and persistent insulting of the black womanhood which it sought and seeks to prostitute to its lust.[41]

The retaliatory import of the rape for the black man would be entrapment in an untenable situation. Clearly the master hoped that once the black man was struck by his manifest inability to rescue his women from the sexual assaults of the master, he would begin to experience deep-seated doubts about his ability to resist at all.

Certainly the wholesale rape of slave women must have had a profound impact on the slave community. Yet it could not succeed in its intrinsic aim of stifling the impetus towards struggle. Countless black women did not passively submit to these abuses, as the slaves in general refused to passively accept their bondage. The struggles of the slave woman in the sexual realm were a continuation of the resistance interlaced in the slave's daily existence. As such, this was yet another form of insurgency, a response to a politically tinged sexual repression.

Even E. Franklin Frazier (who goes out of his way to defend the thesis that 'the master in his mansion and his coloured mistress in her special house nearby represented the final triumph of social ritual in the presence of the deepest feelings of human solidarity'[42]) could not entirely ignore the black woman who fought back. He notes: 'That physical compulsion was necessary at times to secure submission on the part of black women . . . is supported by historical evidence and has been preserved in the tradition of Negro families.'[43]

The sexual contest was one of many arenas in which the black woman had to prove herself as a warrior against oppression. What Frazier unwillingly concedes would mean that countless children brutally fathered by whites were conceived in the thick of battle. Frazier himself cites the story of a black woman whose great grandmother, a former slave, would describe with great zest the battles

behind all her numerous scars – that is, all save one. In response to questions concerning the unexplained scar, she had always simply said: 'White men are as low as dogs, child, stay away from them.' The mystery was not unveiled until after the death of this brave woman: 'She received that scar at the hands of her master's youngest son, a boy of about eighteen years at the time she conceived their child, my grandmother Ellen.'[44]

THE BLACK WOMAN AS COMRADE

An intricate and savage web of oppression intruded at every moment into the black woman's life during slavery. Yet a single theme appears at every juncture: the woman transcending, refusing, fighting back, asserting herself over and against terrifying obstacles. It was not her comrade brother against whom her incredible strength was directed. She fought alongside her man, accepting or providing guidance according to her talents and the nature of their tasks. She was in no sense an authoritarian figure; neither her domestic role nor her acts of resistance could relegate the man to the shadows. On the contrary, she herself had just been forced to leave behind the shadowy realm of female passivity in order to assume her rightful place beside the insurgent male.

This portrait cannot, of course, presume to represent every individual slave woman. It is rather a portrait of the potentials and possibilities inherent in the situation to which slave women were anchored. Invariably there were those who did not realise this potential. There were those who were indifferent and a few who were outright traitors. But certainly they were not the vast majority. The image of black women enchaining their men, cultivating relationships with the oppressor is a cruel fabrication which must be called by its right name. It is a dastardly ideological weapon designed to impair our capacity for resistance today by foisting upon us the ideal of male supremacy.

According to a time-honoured principle, advanced by Marx, Lenin, Fanon and numerous other theorists, the status of women in any given society is a barometer measuring the overall level of social development. As Fanon has masterfully shown, the strength and efficacy of social struggles – and especially revolutionary movements – bear an immediate relationship to the range and quality of female participation.

The meaning of this principle is strikingly illustrated by the role of the black woman during slavery. Attendant to the indiscriminant brutal pursuit of profit, the slave woman attained a correspondingly brutal status of equality. But in practice, she would work up a fresh content for this deformed equality by inspiring and participating in acts of resistance of every form and colour. She could turn the weapon of equality in struggle against the avaricious slave system which had engendered the mere caricature of equality in oppression. The black woman's activities increased the total incidence of anti-slavery assaults.

But most important, without consciously rebellious black women, the theme of resistance could not have become so thoroughly intertwined in the fabric of daily existence. The status of black women within the community of slaves was definitely a barometer indicating the overall potential for resistance.

This process did not end with the formal dissolution of slavery. Under the impact of racism, the black woman has been continually constrained to inject herself into the desperate struggle for existence. She – like her man – has been compelled to work for wages, providing for her family as she was previously forced to provide for the slaveholding class. The infinitely onerous nature of this equality should never be overlooked. For the black woman has always also remained harnessed to the chores of the household. Yet, she could never be exhaustively defined by her uniquely 'female' responsibilities.

As a result, black women have made significant contributions to struggles against the racism and the dehumanising exploitation of a wrongly organised society. In fact, it would appear that the intense levels of resistance historically maintained by black people and thus the historical function of the Black Liberation Struggle as harbinger of change throughout the society are due in part to the greater *objective* equality between the black man and the black woman. Du Bois put it this way:

> In the great rank and file of our five million women, we have the upworking of new revolutionary ideals, which must in time have vast influence on the thought and action of this land.[45]

Official and unofficial attempts to blunt the effects of the egalitarian tendencies as between the black man and woman should come as no surprise. The matriarch concept, embracing the cliched 'female castrator', is, in the last instance, an open weapon of ideological warfare. Black men and women alike remain its potential victims – men unconsciously lunging at the woman, equating her with the myth; women sinking back into the shadows, lest an aggressive posture resurrect the myth in themselves.

The myth must be consciously repudiated as myth and the black woman in her true historical contours must be resurrected. We, the black women of today, must accept the full weight of a legacy wrought in blood by our mothers in chains. Our fight, while identical in spirit, reflects different conditions and thus implies different paths of struggle. But as heirs to a tradition of supreme perserverance and heroic resistance, we must hasten to take our place wherever our people are forging on towards freedom.

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BANGLADESH

A VICTORY FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

By Y. M. Dadoo

On 16th December – coincidentally a date of historic importance in the calendar of the South African liberation movement – with the total and unconditional surrender of the Pakistani armed forces to the High Command of the Indian armed forces and Mukti Bahini, the guerilla detachment, the newly independent state of Bangladesh became an unchallengeable reality. The triumphant return to Dacca of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, the national hero and acknowledged leader of the 75 million strong people of Bangladesh after his release from a condemned cell in a desert area somewhere in West Pakistan ready to be executed, put the final seal of approval to this reality. Joi Bangla! – Victory to Bengal!

The chain of events in the long and bloody struggle of the Bengalese population of former East Pakistan for national rights and freedoms and the ending of colonial oppression can be traced back essentially to August 14th, 1947, the day that the sub-continent of India was partitioned under the Mountbatten Settlement as part of its price for independence.

During the days of the Raj, the British imperialists, faced with the mighty upsurge of Indian nationalism, made full use of the notorious policy of divide-and-rule. They instigated communal tension especially between Hindus and Muslims; they sought to promote communal antagonism in the political life of the country by the establishment of communal electorates. They assiduously sought to cultivate the support of the landowning classes as a possible force to be used as a counter-weight. It is also a fact of history now that the foundation of the Moslem League in 1906 was originally inspired by high British officials around the Viceroy at the time, Lord Minto.

Thus the British Raj strove to hold its own against the rising tide of militant Indian nationalism with the unfettered use of the coercive machinery of the State – by the use of terror and repression and by instigating communal tensions and antagonisms. In 1946, however, when the entire Indian people rose in revolt, with the mutiny of the Royal Indian Navy, mass strikes and the massive demonstrations of the people with the slogans 'Hindus and Moslems Unite!' 'Down with British Imperialism!' the continuance of British rule became untenable and the British rulers were compelled to quit.

The creation of the two states under the Mountbatten Settlement was based on the religious composition of the population and treating religion as equivalent to nationality.

On this false principle, the territories with a predominantly Hindu population were incorporated and the Moslem areas were made part of Pakistan. And since the Moslems formed a compact majority in the north-west and the north-east of British India, Pakistan became a state consisting of two parts separated from each other by 1100 miles of Indian territory.

PAKISTAN AS A STATE

West Pakistan comprised more than four-fifths of Pakistan's territory

with an area of 806,500 square kilometers and a population of about 60 million. The area of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) is only 141,000 square kilometers whilst the population is 75 million strong. In the west the population is made up of four nationalities: Sindhis, Panjabis, Pathans and Baluchis, as well as the Urdu- and Gujurati-speaking Moslem settlers from India. East Pakistan on the other hand, has a homogeneous population of more than 98 per cent Bengali people with an ancient culture, proud of their history, literature and language.

In setting-up Pakistan the British colonialists had handed power over to the West Pakistani landowners (notably Panjabi) and industrialists and in time power came to be concentrated in a feudal-military clique and a handful of wealthy families.

Economically, barely two dozen families have acquired control over 60 per cent of the nation's industrial assets, 80 per cent of banking assets and 75 per cent of insurance assets. 82 per cent of the total bank advances are concentrated in only 3 per cent of the total accounts. The tax structure is one of the most regressive in the world. Only 2 per cent of the GNP is being realised as direct taxes as against 6 per cent in other developing countries, while oppressive indirect taxes are imposed on such essential commodities as salt. Protected markets, tax holidays, huge subsidies in the form of bonus vouchers, credits and grant of foreign exchange at the artificially low official rate have created specially favourable conditions for the growth of monopolies and cartels. Despite nominal land reforms, feudal lords have retained princely estates. They enjoy vast privileges and their prosperity increases while the lot of the poor peasants become more and more desperate. According to official estimates one-fifth of the total labour force or about 9 million people are unemployed. The industrial workers are suffering the full impact of the sharp rise in the cost of living. The impact of the unending rise in the cost of living index is acutely felt by school and college teachers, low paid officers and employees, particularly the 4th grade employees of government.

MILITARY DICTATORSHIP TAKES CONTROL

Ever since the inception of Pakistan, the Army has been playing a most vital role in Pakistani politics. This can be explained by the fact that military service in Punjab of undivided India was traditionally

considered the most important factor from the point of view of economic power and social prestige.

With the death of Jinnah, the centre of power shifted into the hands of Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister and Jinnah's most trusted man. The Muslim League, the Party of Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan was dominated by a handful of big semi-feudal landlords and industrialists belonging to Punjab and Sindh. Its contempt for democratic processes during the years it remained in power was clearly manifested in the speech of the country's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in the so-called Constituent Assembly when he said, 'I have always considered myself as the Prime Minister of the League. I never regarded myself as the Prime Minister chosen by the members of the Constituent Assembly'.

When Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated in 1951, (alleged to have been the work of British intelligence because he had entered into military agreements with the US and transferring Pakistan from British to American influence) the power game of the feudal-military clique and handful of wealthy families dominating West Pakistan came into full play. Intrigues and manoeuvres by power-hungry politicians led to Prime Ministers changing continuously until General Ayub Khan took power in a bloodless coup on 7th October 1958. In a broadcast to the nation the very next day Ayub Khan decalimed, 'There has been no limit to the depth of their (the politicians) baseness, chicanery, deceit and degradation. Having nothing constructive to offer, they used provincial feelings, sectarian, religious and racial differences to set a Pakistani against a Pakistani ... The result is total administrative, economic political and moral chaos in the country'.

During Ayub's eleven years of military rule, Pakistan went through a grim period of denial of basic rights of the individual and suppression of the democratic and workers' movement. Bribery and corruption flourished and under his rule, twenty families came to dominate the entire economy. His own son, Gauhar Ayub became a millionaire overnight. The 'Basic Democracy' introduced by Ayub had nothing in common with democracy. An electoral system was introduced which in effect meant that 120,000 persons (out of a total Pakistani population of 130 million), mostly hand-picked by the bureaucracy, were called upon to elect a National Assembly and a President. How this electoral device was used to get Ayub Khan elected as President reveals a sordid story of bribery, corruption and large-scale buying up of voters.

However, the people of Pakistan could no longer tolerate the wanton repression of the Ayub regime and by 1968 there was widespread revolt in both wings of Pakistan. Ayub Khan was forced to step down and General Yahya Khan took over as the new Martial Law Administrator on March 25th, 1969.

PAKISTAN – A WILLING PARTNER OF IMPERIALISM

Pakistan from its inception has been a willing partner of imperialism – first British and then American. The bureaucratic regimes needed all the assistance they could get from imperialism in maintaining their power against the people.

The PAK-US agreements of the early fifties subsequently led to the military-bureaucratic clique becoming the instrument of US military pacts and Pakistan found itself being simultaneously a member of CENTO and SEATO, the two imperialist alliances directed against Asian liberation. From the time that the US-Pakistan Mutual Security Pact was signed in 1954 up to the time of the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965, the USA supplied to Pakistan £2000 million worth of arms.

As the willing tool of imperialism, Pakistan had been playing a most reactionary role in the international arena. It called off the trade boycott of South Africa which was imposed just prior to partition by the Congress-League interim government in 1946 at the behest of the South African Indian Congress. In the Suez War of 1956, the Pakistan Government openly supported the British-French-Israeli aggression against Egypt, in defiance of the feelings of the people who were wholly sympathetic to the cause of Arab liberation.

Thus imperialism and particularly, the USA must bear the main burden of blame for setting Pakistan on the course of militarism and war; for the bloody repression by its rulers of the ceaseless struggle of the people at home for democracy and for the cessation of all imperialist links.

COLONIAL OPPRESSION OF EAST PAKISTAN

East Pakistan was not only numerically the bigger wing of Pakistan, but it is also one of the most densely populated areas in the world. In an area of 55,000 square miles live 75 million people (over 1360 persons per square mile).

The people are extremely poor and almost a quarter of a century of independence has not made any appreciable difference to their living condition from what it was during the time of the British Raj.

From the very beginning, the ruling classes, the reactionary big bourgeoisie and big landowners had in their own narrow class interests pursued a policy of suppression of all democratic national rights of the various nationalities. Bengalis in East Pakistan and of Sindhis, Pathans and Baluchis in the western wing. The 22 wealthy families who controlled the whole economy of Pakistan were given carte blanche to exploit the valuable economic resources and the people of East Pakistan.

The extent of the ruthless economic exploitation to which East Pakistan was subjected to can be gleamed from the following statistical figures:

(a) While the exports of East Pakistan – primarily jute – provided the main foreign exchange for Pakistan as a whole, it was West Pakistan which received 70 per cent of the imports and 70 per cent of foreign aid.

(b) Out of the total revenue expenditure of the government only one-fifth was spent in Bengal. Of the total development expenditure during the same period only one-third was spent in Bengal.

(c) The raw material of the East was used for the development of industries in the West – 20 times as much was spent on agricultural development in the West.

(d) In the field of government services, Bengalis accounted for barely 15 per cent in central government services and less than 10 per cent in the defence services.

(e) The per capita incomes in the two wings according to the 1969 figures were 312 rupees in East Pakistan, 614 rupees in the Panjab and as much as 854 rupees in Sind.

The unspeakable plight of the Bengali people was summed up in the following words in Sheikh Mujibar Rahman's Election Broadcast of 28th October 1970:

> **The total economic impact of such discrimination has been that the economy of Bengal today is in a state of imminent collapse. Near famine conditions are prevailing in the majority of the villages. Some 1,500,000 tons of rice has had to be imported only to save people from starvation.**

FOR DEMOCRACY AND AUTONOMY

The people of East Pakistan were called upon to undertake a long and bitter struggle as far back as 1948 on the issue of language. The Pakistani rulers wanted to make Urdu the official language. According to the 1951 Census Urdu was the mother-tongue of only 3.3 per cent of the population and only 7.3 per cent could speak Urdu at all. In East Pakistan it was understood and spoken by only 1.1 per cent of the people. According to the first Chief Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, 'Pakistan is a Muslim nation . . . It is necessary for a nation to have one language and that language can only be Urdu and no other language'.

This affront to the rich Bengali language of 56 per cent of the population aroused tremendous resentment among the Bengali people and they demanded that Bengali be made one of the state languages. They fought uncompromisingly and many students and youth laid down their lives in defence of their mother-tongue. In 1952 an all-party committee was formed which gave a call for a general strike on 21st February to protest against the Government decision to ignore the just demands of the people for the recognition of Bengali as the national language of East Pakistan and as one of the state languages, for the release of all political prisoners, removal of ban on all newspapers which supported the movement. The authorities tried to break the strike by bullets and bayonets and in the ensuing fight 19 students were killed by the police.

However, as a result of the relentless struggle of the people, in 1954 Bengali was made the official language of East Pakistan and one of the two national languages. All democratic parties and forces including, the Communist Party of East Pakistan which had been functioning underground since 1948, participated in the popular struggle.

In the provincial election in the same year, the ruling Muslim League was decisively defeated by the United Front of opposition parties. The United Front won 290 out of the 300 seats on a popular programme which was radical in character. It demanded full autonomy for East Pakistan in all matters excepting defence, foreign affairs and currency. It demanded the nationalisation of the jute industry and pledged to guarantee economic and social rights of the workers in accordance with the conventions of the International Labour

Organisation. The main architects of the United Front were the Awami League and the Communist Party which had considerable influence among the workers and peasants.

The ruling clique organised clashes in working class areas between non-Bengali Muslim workers and their Bengali counterparts. Thousands were jailed and within a few weeks the United Front Provincial Ministry was dismissed by the West Pakistani rulers in control of the Central Government on the pretext that it was in league with India. One of the reasons given for the removal of the UF ministry from power given by the then Prime Minister of Pakistan in the Constituent Assembly on 28th June 1954 was that 'the communists although not a part and parcel of the united front, were actively supporting it. Some of the communists were masquerading under different party labels'.

In 1958, four months before the holding of General Election, Ayub Khan seized power, clamping down martial law in attempt to suppress the rising tide of democratic movement which it was feared might find its reflection in the elections. Ayub Khan's regime let loose a reign of terror combined with anti-Indian jingoism aimed at disrupting the popular struggle for democratic and social advance.

After the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, the Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman launched a vigorous campaign for its six-point programme. This was basically a programme for parliamentary democracy and full autonomy. Only foreign affairs and defence would vest with the central government and all other subjects, including foreign trade, would be in the hands of the East Pakistan administration. The six-point programme met with wide support from the people of East Pakistan and the movement launched by the Awami League for its recognition (1966) was also supported by the Communists and the left-wing section of the National Awami Party (NAP) then led by Maulana Bhasani. However, the Ayub regime suppressed the movement with violence. During 1968-69 there was a huge popular upsurge against the military-bureaucratic Ayub regime throughout the whole of Pakistan. The Communist Party of East Pakistan once again played an active role in forging a united front of all democratic and opposition forces. In East Pakistan, the popular upsurge was based on the 11-point programme advanced by the Students' Action Committee (composed of all progressive and democratic student organisations) and supported by the Awami League and the National

Awami League led by Wali and Muzaffar. The 11-point programme contained demands for a neutral and independent foreign policy, scrapping of the military pacts (CENTO and SEATO), nationalisation of banks, insurance, and big industries, living wages for the workers, reduction of rents and taxes, educational reforms and full civil liberty in addition to the demands for full autonomy (i.e. the six-point programme of the Awami League).

In West Pakistan all the opposition forces were united on the basis of the demand for parliamentary democracy and adult franchise. The people of Pathanland (North West Frontier), Baluchistan and Sind joined the movement with the aspirations of parliamentary democracy and autonomy for their national units.

It was this mass popular upsurge that forced Ayub Khan in March 1969 to step down and hand over to Yahya Khan as the new Martial Law Administrator. Martial law was proclaimed throughout Pakistan. But the people's movement was so powerful that Yahya Khan had to concede to popular demands for a general election based on universal adult franchise. The National Assembly to be elected was to have the task of framing a new constitution.

LANDSLIDE VICTORY FOR AWAMI LEAGUE

The General Election was held in December 1970 – the first in the 23 years history of Pakistan as a state. The results of the election came as a stunning blow to the West Pakistani ruling class. Their main reckoning had rested on the belief that the division of East Pakistani votes among a number of different parties would enable the parties of the West with their campaign of hatred against India to dominate the new Constituent Assembly and so prevent the formulation of a constitution granting autonomy to East Pakistan.

But in that election, the Awami League swept the polls in East Pakistan securing 167 National Assembly seats out of 169 and 290 Provincial Assembly seats out of 300. The Awami League had also secured an absolute majority in the All-Pakistan National Assembly – 167 seats out of the total of 313.

This overwhelming victory caused grave consternation among the ruling military junta and the right reactionary forces. A conspiracy was set afoot to nullify the verdict of the people. Yahya Khan had

summoned the first session of the National Assembly to be held at Dacca on March 3rd. But Z. A. Bhutto, leader of the People's Party declared that he and his party would not attend the session of the National Assembly and if the National Assembly was held on that date 'the whole of West Pakistan would be in flames'. The People's Party had, through the demagogic pronouncement of Zulficar Bhutto that his party stood for 'socialist policies' and his anti-India tirade, secured a majority of the National Assembly seats (84 out of 144) from West Pakistan. Those seats were only won in Punjab and Sind provinces and the People's Party did not succeed in securing a single seat from the North West Frontier (Pathanland) and Baluchistan. It was the progressive, anti-imperialist National Awami Party of Wali Khan which emerged as the majority party in the latter two provinces.

Bhutto was from the very beginning dead-set against the six-point programme and the autonomy for the nationalities. He and his party tried to pressurise the Awami League to give up the six-point programme but without avail. Using the opposition of Bhutto to a convention of the National Assembly without 'prior agreement between the two major parties, the Awami League and the People's Party – on the question of the future constitution of Pakistan' as a pretext, Yahya Khan postponed the meeting of the National Assembly till March 25th.

YAHYA'S TREACHERY – PEOPLE FIGHT BACK

The news of the sudden postponement of the National Assembly session came as a rude shock to all sections of the people. The Awami League called for a peaceful general strike for five days from 2nd to 6th March as a protest. The Communists, the National Awami Party and other democratic and working class forces supported the strike.

In spite of the curfew imposed by the military junta, the people came out in peaceful mass demonstrations. The general strike from March 2nd was a complete success – all sections of the people as well as police and government officers joined in. The whole people of Bangladesh demonstrated unprecedented unity in the face of the most brutal repression unleashed by the military junta.

On March 7th, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made a declaration of

policy at a mass rally attended by about one million people. He laid down demands for (a) transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people (b) lifting of martial law (c) withdrawal of army to the barracks and (d) inquiry into mass killings from 1st March.

He further announced that as from the 8th there shall be a peaceful non-cooperation movement against the government and the army until these demands are met, and that the participation of his party in the session of the National Assembly called for the 25th will be dependent on the acceptance of the demands by the authorities.

The non-cooperation movement was received with whole-hearted and determined support from the entire Bengali people throughout the land – in fact, the Awami League was running the civil administration of East Pakistan; the whole of the administrative service, including the police department were acting according to the directives of the League. Whilst the non-cooperation was going on, Yahya Khan was secretly concentrating troops and making practical preparations for an armed onslaught against the people. He made a show of negotiations by coming to Dacca on 14th March to have talks with the leader of the Awami League, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. During the talks which lasted several days an impression was created by Yahya that 'some progress' was being made and he publicly stated that he had 'agreed in principle' to the demands placed by the Awami League chief. The people were left under the impression that at long last a political settlement would come about and the crisis would be over. But Yahya Khan was marking time, waiting for his troops to arrive from Karachi. On March 25th when the troop ships weighed anchor in Chittagong harbour, Yahya Khan abruptly broke off the discussion, went off to Karachi, denounced Mujib as a traitor and ordered his troops to take over. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested and deported to West Pakistan for a secret trial before a military tribunal; the Awami League was banned and all elected bodies dissolved. A reign of terror was let loose, popular leaders were slaughtered. The army stopped at nothing – killing, looting, rape and arson were the order of the day. Hundreds of thousands lay dead and, in the days that followed there was the flight of 10 million refugees to India. Bestial indeed, were the deeds of the Pakistani military junta! and it must be held responsible before the bar of history,

WAR OF LIBERATION

Now, there was no turning back for the people of East Pakistan. Their strivings tor democracy and autonomy within one Pakistan were brought to nought by the treachery of Yahya Khan and the inhuman brutalities of his army. The only path open to the people was to fight on with all their might and main, with even greater courage and determination and regardless of the cost in life for total liberation of their motherland – Sonar Bangla (Golden Bangla). A few days after the tragic event of March 25th, at a place called Mujib Nagar, members of the National Assembly from East Pakistan met to proclaim a 'Government of Free Bangladesh' with Nazrul Islam as its President and Tajuddin Ahmed as its Prime Minister. The East Bengal Regiment, East Pakistan Rifles and the police joined the people, formed the Mukti Fouz and embarked on the armed battle.

The people of Bangladesh, the youth, men and women, workers and peasants rushed to join the Mukti Bahini, the guerilla force to face and destroy the marauding hordes of the 80,000 troops of the Pakistani army who were causing havoc and spreading destruction of life, property and land. Soon, the Mukti Bahini began to achieve remarkable successes, sinking the boats of the invaders, and controlling substantial parts of the country.

As the struggle assumed serious proportions, the Bangladesh Communist Party which had all along consistently and actively participated in the war of liberation and the National Awami Party urged the formation of a national liberation front to carry through the struggle. This was resisted by the leaders of the Awami League. As a compromise a coordinating committee was formed on which were represented the Awami League, the National Awami Party led by Muzaffar Ahmed, the National Awami Party led by Maulana Bhashani, the Communist Party of Bangladesh and the Congress Party.

Yahya Khan's hopes for a quick victory were fading away fast as a result of the failure of his troops to contain the advances of the Mukti Bahini guerilla forces or to break up the united resistance and morale of the heroic people of Bangladesh. His attempts to muster a band of quislings from among the Bengali politicians remaining in Bangladesh, in order to give a civilian face to the rule of the military, also ended in dismal failure. The costs of the war of repression in East Pakistan

placed extra burden on the already fragile economy of Pakistan. It has been estimated that this war cost 11 million rupees per day. The international debt is about 4 billion dollars and the state was running out of reserves to pay the interest on those debts. The rising cost of living and the disruption of the economy was placing heavy burdens on the people of West Pakistan. In West Pakistan itself there were stirrings of discontent and there was a growing sympathy for the people of East Pakistan. The regime had to resort to widespread arrests and shootings. The situation was growing desperate for the Yahya regime and it was becoming evident to Yahya that it was not possible to hold down the people of Bangladesh for long. The West Pakistan Government sought to blame India as a source of all the trouble and tried to make out that the struggle in East Pakistan was nothing but an Indian plot to subvert and destroy Pakistan. By presenting the conflict as between India and Pakistan, it had hoped to rally the people of Pakistan against the 'foreign aggressor' and on this basis it also sought the intervention of the imperialist powers.

WAR WITH INDIA

The military regime of West Pakistan deliberately built up tension on the Indian border by moving troops along the border and by shelling positions on the Indian side. Having failed to provoke the Indian Government into war, it finally conducted heavy-range bombardment across the frontier into India, thereby compelling the Indian armed forces to cross the frontier to deal with the bombarding positions. On December 3rd, the West Pakistan Government opened full scale war against India both in east and the west. In the west, Pakistani planes bombed twelve Indian airfields in a pre-emptive bid to ground and destroy the Indian air force. The Pakistani army in a planned offensive crossed the Jammu-Kashmir cease fire line established in 1948. On the same day Pakistan announced that it considered itself at war with India. Addressing the joint session of the two chambers of the Indian Parliament on 4th December, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said that the government of Pakistan had ignored the steps taken by her government to preserve peace and declared war upon India. The Pakistan authorities, she said had turned the war against the people of East Pakistan into full scale war against India. She categorically

repudiated the Pakistani propaganda charges that India had attacked Pakistan.

During the occupation of Bangladesh the West Pakistani army was guilty of genocide and inhuman atrocities. Hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children were indiscriminately slaughtered – even babies were not spared. Intellectuals and professional people were systematically murdered. Countless women were raped. An estimated 600,000 homes were destroyed and nearly 1,400,000 farm families left without implements or animals to work their land.

Of the Pakistani army's massacre of Bengalis, Sheik Mujib declared: 'If Hitler could have been alive today he would be ashamed'. When the history comes to be written of the indescribable atrocities committed by the Pakistani troops it will add a gruesome chapter to the record of man's inhumanity to man. In the end however, the people of Bangladesh with a will to win their freedom emerged triumphant. Their courage, heroism and endurance knew no bounds.

The Mukti Bahini, working in close concert with their ally and friend, the Indian armed forces fought with great courage and skill and pinned down the Pakistani army until they were forced to surrender unconditionally in December, 1971.

The heroic people of Bangladesh in winning their freedom from colonial oppression and exploitation and in establishing an independent sovereign state have added yet another glorious chapter to the proud history of national liberation movement.

SOLIDARITY OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

From the very outset, the Indian people and all progressive and working class organisations have fully supported the just cause of the people of Bangladesh and rendered them all practical assistance. It is to the credit of the Communist Party of India that it took the initiative in bringing before the public eye the true facts of the situation in East Pakistan and explaining in an objective manner the causes and the reasons for the mass upsurge of the people of East Pakistan for democracy and autonomy and subsequently for an independent Bangladesh. As early as May, 1971 the CPI published a booklet *Case for Bangladesh* which is an invaluable document for a proper study of the question, Why Bangladesh?

By its strenuous campaign, the CPI was instrumental in mobilising and rallying the masses of the Indian people in support of the heroic struggle of the people of Bangladesh.

Equally, the Government of India and the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi had shown great sympathy and rendered all possible support. The Government of India had not only to contend with the problem of the 10 million refugees who had crossed the borders from East Pakistan into India but had also to withstand provocation by the Pakistani armed forces on the borders and the deliberate anti-India campaign of the Yahya regime. When the war came, the Indian armed forces working in concert with the Mukti Bahini forces of Bangladesh decisively defeated the Pakistani aggressor and with gallantry and praiseworthy achievements in the fields of battle helped in the liberation of Bangladesh.

India fought for a just cause and the sympathies of all progressive people were on her side.

Standing on Indian soil for the first time as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addressing a massive rally in Calcutta warmly acknowledged and expressed his gratitude for Indian help and made repeated references to the special debt of Bangladesh to Mrs Gandhi. 'Friendship between Bangladesh and India', he went on to say, 'would be everlasting and no conspiracy could create a cleavage in it.' In the joint declaration which was issued after talks between Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi it is stipulated that the Indian forces having now completed their task would be pulled out by March 25th. The two leaders resolved to give practical shape to the aspirations of the peoples of India and Bangladesh, guided by the principles of democracy, socialism, non-alignment and opposition to racialism and colonialism.

NIXON-YAHYA COLLABORATION

It was but natural that there should be the closest collaboration between the Yahya regime and the Nixon administration since Pakistan has had all along been a loyal member of the aggressive, imperialist military blocs in Asia and the recipient of massive military and financial US aid.

The Nixon Administration had no desire to see the establishment of a

peaceful zone in Asia of progressive, anti-imperialist states with socialist policies, non-involvement with imperialist blocs and committed to support for anti-imperialist struggles and national liberation movements. Under cover of assurances of 'impartiality' and 'desire for peace', the United States pursued an anti-Indian policy in the Indo-Pakistani conflict, took steps to drag out military operations and sided with the Yahya Khan military regime. This came out clearly from the record of the secret meetings of the elite Washington Special Action Group which acted as a cabinet of the Nixon Administration, as divulged in the 'Anderson papers'. All allocations of currency, goods or loans for the needs of India's development were stopped. At the United Nations, Washington sought to brand India as the aggressor and called for the cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of all troops without dealing with the causes of the conflict. Attempts were made to supply arms to the Yahya regime through a third party, such as Jordan or Saudi Arabia. A group of ships of the 7th Fleet headed by the air-craft carrier, Enterprise, was sent to the Bay of Bengal to intimidate India and divert part of her forces.

Bangladesh and India – and indeed, the whole of progressive mankind – can never forget or forgive the despicable role of US imperialism. As Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had said, 'When the Pakistan forces were killing my countrymen, the United States Government knew how the arms that it had supplied to Pakistan were being used, but it did not stop the supply. It stopped only aid to India. I want to tell the American Government that the days of imperialist manoeuvres are over in India and Bangladesh'.

FIRM STAND OF THE SOVIET UNION

The people of Bangladesh will never forget the firm political and practical support rendered to their just liberation struggle by the world's first and strongest socialist state, the Soviet Union. There can be no doubt that India's strength and determination were greatly fortified through the historic Soviet-Indian treaty of August 1971.

The policy of the Soviet government was clearly expressed by its proposals when the Indian-Pakistani fighting was discussed at the UN Security Council. These proposals clearly linked the question of a cease-fire and the ending of hostilities with that of a political settlement

which would satisfy the aspirations of the people of what was then East Pakistan.

It is clear that the consistent policy followed by the Soviet government was based on loyalty to the Leninist principle of proletarian internationalism and unvarying support to the oppressed peoples in their just struggles for national freedom.

Nor shall we easily forget or forgive the shameful role played by the present representatives of the Chinese People's Republic in their first major appearance in the Security Council of the United Nations. In effect they lined up with United States imperialism in supporting the bloodstained regime of Yahya Khan. Here, if ever, was an illuminating illustration of how anti-Sovietism has led the ruling Maoist faction into positions which have absolutely nothing in common with either the principles of Marxism-Leninism or the cause of national liberation.

POWERFUL ALLY

Many and serious problems face the newly-born state of Bangladesh, of reconstruction and regeneration in the frightful human and material destruction wrought upon the nation by the barbarian hordes who took their revenge in advance for their impending defeat. Gigantic tasks face Mujib's government and the entire nation; tasks in which they deserve and should receive generous aid from the peoples of all countries. Victory has cost them dear.

But looking further into the future, one thing is certain: the new Bangladesh, born in blood and fire, is a powerful new recruit to the ranks of those countries which fight against imperialism, for the national and social liberation of all oppressed peoples.

We hail the liberation of Bangladesh as a great historic victory for the world forces of peace and national liberation, as well as for our own South African people fighting for freedom from racial oppression and tyranny.

Jai Hind! Jai Sonar Bangla!

February 1972

Reflections on Ruth First's The Barrel of a Gun

by Rod Dyson

Ruth First states that she intends to limit her book* to a consideration of the internal conditions which render African countries vulnerable to the coup d'etat, and to exclude from her scope other factors such as the dependence of African countries on neo-colonial and imperialist powers. Within these limits she has organised an immense amount of useful information in an accessible and readable way. Three important coups – those in Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana – are described in great detail. Additionally, by way of comparison and in the process of generalising, almost all the military coups or mutinies which have occurred are dealt with to some extent. (The book was written before the Ugandan coup.) The immediate causes of coups are identified as (1) the economic crisis of underdevelopment which has been created by colonialism and is maintained by imperialism; (2) political crises brought about by rival 'elite' groups vying for political and commercial benefits and manipulating the state to further their private interests:

**The Barrel of a Gun,* Allen Lane £4.20 (reviewed in *The African Communist* No. 44, 1971.

the lack of cohesion of ruling groups opens the way to the army, who can exploit popular dissatisfaction; (3) more or less direct intervention by imperialist powers who use this disunity to increase their grip and forestall radical policies; (4) the corporate interest of officer cliques who use their armed power to defend their positions from political forces or from each other (eg Nigeria). In addition, the author suggests that the bureaucratic and authoritarian pattern of colonial administration prepared the ground for military rule, with its similar intolerance of political activity.

This last point shows up the book's main weakness: too great an emphasis on the *forms* of political power, and too little on its *content.* The book is mostly concerned with personalities and factions within the elite ruling-groups, of which the army officers form a part, not an alternative. Thus, although Ruth First correctly points out that an army embraces all the contradictions of the society of which it is a part, and shows that it is unable to carry out a social revolution (ie to do the work of a class), in general she fails to make a systematic analysis of what class and what international interests are served by specific coups.

This failure is linked to a widespread but mistaken view which the author shares. It is that African politics cannot be understood in terms of class: 'Class formation is still rudimentary; and class characterisation alone, an incomplete guide to the nature of power in the new African state.' (p97). Except in primitive communism, all societies are composed of classes. And although communal elements exist in many African societies, they were never dominant over the continent as a whole, nor in most cases were they able to survive the colonial period intact. Moreover, the containment of Africa within the world imperialist system has inevitably given rise to and will continue to nurture antagonistic classes. It is true that African countries on the whole do not show the classical features of class societies which Marx and Engels described. It is also true that both the bourgeoisie and working-classes remain weak and undeveloped. That does not mean there are not classes. Uneven development is the general rule in our continent, with feudal, communal, capitalist and state capitalist forms existing side by side. The predominant class is the peasantry, with an associated petit-bourgeois stratum of traders, small proprietors and bureaucrats. But the peasantry is far from being a homogenous body. Marxist-Leninists

do not yet have an adequate account of these classes and of their general rules of development. This is a major weakness.

In addition, such an account would have to place African societies within the general world context. Lenin pointed out that Marxists need to understand not only the relations between all the classes in their own country, but also between their country and all other countries. This is particularly important in our continent and in our times, the epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism. For developments in individual countries can only be understood in terms of this world-wide process, which, in all its complexity, will determine the relative strength of the various classes in Africa.

GUERILLA WAR

Ruth First considers such factors 'external', but this is true only in a formal sense. This error lessens the usefulness of her book to activists of the national liberation and working-class movements. She offers few solutions and some of these are seriously misleading. Perhaps the most indicative, since it proceeds wholly from the overemphasis on forms, is her view of guerilla warfare as a cure-all for African ills:

> **'Has there been another way in Africa; can there be another way? Perhaps only where guerilla warfare is the path to liberation is this likely . . . Guerilla warfare in its nature cannot be led by elite leaderships, nor can it be fought for elite aims.' (p51)**

Guerilla struggle, as Marx, Engels and Lenin pointed out, is only a *form* of struggle, which can be used by various classes for various ends. Without a progressive and coherent ideology, guerilla warfare degenerates into banditry or 'warlordism'. Ruth First makes frequent reference to the Cuban experience, but even given the anti-imperialist character of Castro's movement, it was necessary for him to join forces with the party of the working-class and with the socialist countries, in order to consolidate the popular character of the Cuban revolution.

There is another reason why the international context is indispensible. In the final section of her book, Ruth First discusses the development of social classes in relation to economic growth. The inter-dependence of economic development and political trends in

Africa is rich and complex. Drawing on the work of the economists Arrighi and Saul, Ruth First suggests that imperialism stunts development, and precludes the growth of both a full bourgeois and a proletarian class. While this is undeniable, it must be understood as a tendency rather than as an unalterable state. Contradictions between the imperialists and their allies, in African ruling circles, prevent the total consolidation of capitalist influence. Arrighi and Saul underestimate the potential of even small working-classes, and of semi-proletarian strata – seasonal and occasional workers – which form a large part of the population of African towns.

Moreover, the power of imperialism is not uncurbed. The growing strength of the socialist forces on a world-wide scale has created serious problems for the imperialists, as the recent dollar-crisis and the tactical changes in US foreign policy have shown.

In this context it is disappointing that Ruth First has not taken into consideration the theory of non-capitalist development. Most important in an analysis of political events, is the relationship between industrial development initiated by the state, and the growth and strengthening of the working-class, whose interests are wholly tied to industrial and urban development. Insufficient attention has been given to the problems of sustaining non-capitalist development in countries where the working-class lacks an independent basis of organisation. This has been the decisive difference between countries where successful non-capitalist transition has taken place (eg the Mongolian Peoples Republic) and the so far limited record in Africa. Development and democracy are closely related, for, as Ruth First herself says, a direct cause of coups has been the weakness of radical forces. For this reason, it is the more disappointing that in a book which devotes a lot of space to events in Ghana and the Sudan, this question which involves important considerations regarding the role and function of Marxist-Leninist groups and parties in newly independent countries, has not been discussed.

Nevertheless, *The Barrel of a Gun* remains an invaluable documentary of recent events in Africa. It raises many important questions for the progressive and socialist movement, and it provides a gold-mine of information.

RUTH FIRST REPLIES

Rod Dyson summarises some of my conclusions fairly enough though I would add, with reference to his first sentence, that while my analysis took as its starting point and principal focus the internal structures and thus the contradictions and conflicts within the newly decolonised state, it did this throughout *in the context of imperialism*, for this, as I shall stress later in this reply, in turn drastically affects social alignments and class development possibilities inside the new states.

But by his second paragraph Dyson misses – and thus misinterprets – the principal points I make about class interests and class analysis. Every book or article lays itself open to selective quotation but while it is perfectly permissible to quote particular sentences in order to underline the error of a thesis, care must be taken that a single sentence is not quoted in such a way that it distorts the whole tenor of the argument. I did say on page 97 'Class formation is still rudimentary; and class characterisation alone an incomplete guide to the nature of power in the new state.' The operative word is *alone*, of course. I went on to explain (same paragraph p 97) that 'although there are those, especially since they obtained control of the state as part of the power elite, who have increasingly constituted both an upper social class and a ruling class, and who have found growing opportunity for entrenchment, it remains difficult to equate any one social class with the ruling class. There has been no necessary congruence between wealth and political power or between economic and political control . . .'

My main thesis about class analysis and class structure in these newly decolonised states is that a process of class formation is in progress. The chapter *Politicians in Business* explains the process in some detail and the material about the pre-coup situation (see the first half of the casebooks) concentrates largely on illustrating how ruling group/class formation depends critically on the achievement of political power and access to top state positions which control the processes of accumulation and distribution of resources and through the manipulation of which propertied classes will in time emerge.

It is just because class fluidity and class formation processes are the dominant feature of these societies and neatly structured class categories have not yet crystallised that one cannot make Dyson's tidy 'systematic analysis' of precisely what classes are served by specific coups. The demands of this kind of approach miss the dynamics of the process of class formation and its special forms and significance in these new states. To try to explain these dynamics is by no means to abandon class analysis; it is simply to make a different kind of analysis and, I am convinced, a better one!

After all, remember Engels' admonition to Kautsky about class forces and interests that 'we have no right to represent a tendency gradually becoming a reality as an already accomplished fact'. (*Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence* – Progress Publishers edition page 433). And bearing in mind Dyson's absolutely correct strictures about remembering always the general world, imperialist context, it is important not to slide too lightly over the effects of colonialism on the social structure of the colonies and the restraints that imperialism still places on these regions. It is no doubt common cause that colonialism held back or interrupted the socio-economic development of these countries; one of the consequences was the lack of a clearly definable class structure. The colonial economy was dominated by external forces, foreign capital, foreign entrepreneurs; by independence an indigenous dominant class with power grounded in economic control had not emerged. (see for instance my pages 101-104 *et al*).

Writing about this same problem and calling his article *Elite and Class in the Developing Countries* (Social Sciences Today 4, 1970, USSR Academy of Sciences) M. Cheshkov says: 'In detailed analysis of the situation of this or that particular developing country it often proves impossible to define accurately the class base of the given society's political leadership.' Majhemout Diop, the Senegalese Marxist made the identical point about his own country; nearly all the leaders of the different parties were of much the same social origin, he commented, and most had imbibed their ideology from much the same sources.

Cheshkov warns that the bourgeoisie as a class should not be

regarded as a 'historically immutable social phenomenon.' Marxists after all distinguish between various stages of capitalist development and each is characterised by a different level of class maturity. In colonial conditions the bourgeoisie was not only held back or slowed down, he writes, but essentially deformed. This under-development of the ruling class has crucial consequences for the nature of the state in the decolonised society.

In these societies where it is often impossible to define accurately the class base of the political leadership Cheshkov says (and I wrote similarly, drawing on material by Ken Post on the nature of the decolonised state), 'the state does not rest on a social basis of advanced capitalist relations but for the most part on socio-economic structure of a pre-capitalist type.' This means that in the first place the state in most of these countries is not an instrument of formed class interests, of an established bourgeoisie. This in turn is important for an understanding of the role of armies and their seizure of the state machine via the coup d'etat.

The Cheshkov article reminds us that Marx distinguished between primary and secondary forms of exploitation, namely those which emerge directly in the economic sphere and those represented by political domination and power. In the classic western type of capitalist society primary exploitation was always the main form; in the former colonies it is the second form which is present. In other words a form of political power that is not grounded in a firm infrastructure of economic power. 'The elite' says Cheshkov 'plays the role of a class that has not yet taken final shape. Hence the autonomy of its political behaviour which does not reveal clearly defined class characteristics.' I tried to demonstrate that this is why instruments of state power, like the army and the civil service, enjoy a degree of autonomy from government and the political forces and social and class forces unknown in industrialised states. (see my pages 431-2 and chapter on 'The State of Bureaucrats).

If this is a special condition of the state – though by no means one unused in Marxist literature, see Marx on *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* where he discussed a disjunction between sub and super structures, between economic and political power – it is important that is implications be grasped.

Writing not about Africa but about Pakistan and the question of Bangladesh, Hamza Alavi (*Socialist Register* 1971, especially pages 303-307) elaborates on how the bureaucratic-military oligarchy assumes this relatively autonomous role. Marxist theory, he writes 'conceives of the development of the super-structure of the state in keeping with the development of the infrastructure of the economic foundations of society, namely the capitalist relations of production and the ascendant bourgeoisie. But in post-colonial societies we find the contrary, namely that the development of the super-structure of the state has taken place in advance of the development of the indigenous infrastructure.' This of course is because the state was established as the instrument of the metropolitan (imperialist) bourgeoisie, which control is lifted at the moment of independence when no single indigenous class has exclusive command over it. It is through this special autonomy of the state and its institutions, and especially through the coup d'etat, that a bureaucratic-military oligarchy takes command of the state and proceeds to mediate the competing demands of other propertied classes. Alavi points out that in its turn the bureaucratic-military oligarchy is by no means monolithic. 'It is riven into factions.' There are struggles for power between the factions. 'The factions are not ideological groups which espouse the interests of one class or another though their political counterparts may evoke an ideological idiom.' As for the various social classes and interests, they press their demands by establishing links with the appropriate factions.

Thus, these conflicts are not essentially class-based – I described them as inter-elite or intra-elite conflicts – or about primary (class) but secondary differences and issues, and because these are the jostlings of factions for positions of advantage in the power structure, any account of the process in any specific situation must inevitably describe factional manoeuvres, even the role of personalities in these factions. The thing is not to be diverted by the complexity of the material from seeing it as part of a process.

So, let us by all means make a class analysis, and a description of the role of the state that draws on Marxist theory, but it is important not to oversimplify or vulgarise the method, or to look the other way when phenomena and confrontations do not fall into familiar categories recognisable from other quite disparate situations.

I'm also in favour of doing work that is useful to activists of the national liberation and working class movement. We need solutions, I agree. But the first and indispensable requisite of any solution is to make an appropriate analysis and one rooted in reality even if it is a new and different reality and one that poses some extremely difficult perspectives for revolutionary struggle.

DOUBTS ABOUT NON-CAPITALIST ROAD

What of the role of the socialist sector and its theoretical postulate of the non-capitalist road? I may say I have grave doubts on this issue. I consider the concept long overdue for review – in my opinion, rejection – by Marxists. My principal reason is that far from offering or facilitating a class analysis of, say, Africa, it opts out of class analysis and takes an undifferentiated view of post-colonial society and its internal dynamics.

The concept has several facets and there is no space to go into it in detail. Let me rather tentatively mention only three aspects, and voice some queries on them.

(1) It is instructive to remember the genesis of the thesis when at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International Lenin argued that Russia's peripheral nationalities could coalesce with the socialist revolution at the centre and make the transition from backward colonies to socialism, by-passing capitalism. The peripheries would be developed as a constituent of the country-wide revolutionary movement. Mongolia, after World War 2, was a special case in point able to take advantage of its position close to the Soviet Union. Ulyanosvsky (*Some Problems of Non-Capitalist Development*, Novosti Press, 30 March 1971) stresses that the assistance of the socialist sector is the most important condition of contemporary non-capitalist development. We must it seems to me examine far more closely whether the parallel of the relationship between the Bolshevik Revolution and Russia's peripheral nationalities, and that of the Soviet Union and Mongolia, applies to Africa and its relations with the socialist states, even granted the economic aid supplied by the socialist countries. I think it erroneous to stretch the parallel too far and if it does not fit closely an essential pre-condition of the non-capitalist road thesis falls away.

(2) An integral part of the thesis is the concept of the anti-imperialist national democratic front – an alliance of different social classes as the principal instrument for completing the anti-colonial revolution and laying the basis for a changed social system.

This concept involves crucially the whole question of the nature and role of the national bourgeoisie, and it seems to me that a closer analysis of this class in the post-colonial as distinct from the colonial situation is long overdue. For in the nature of imperialism today there is a powerful case to be made – and one that has repeatedly been made relevant to different situations – for the theory that a native bourgeoisie cannot on its own provide the basis for any independent development of the post-colonial society, that in these circumstances it must play a subordinate role to foreign capital because it realises it cannot grow except as an appendage to foreign capital; thus its anti-imperialist stance of pre-independence days changes to one of collaboration. In which case one must question anew the relation of the different social forces in the front; whose interests it will assert; whether the assertion of national democratic front interests does not carry with it the grave danger of the abdication or minimising of internal class struggle by other component parts of the front.

(3) Then there is the thesis that because these countries do not have the economic or technological prerequisites for immediate socialist transformation and there is not a bourgeoisie strong enough to initiate industrial development, the state should do this, because Dyson argues, then industrialisation and urbanisation will lead to the growth and strengthening of the working class. This is an extremely partial and incomplete view of the consequences of the assertive role of the state. Egypt is the country in Africa where this process of statism has gone furthest. The evidence accumulates that the state sector does not necessarily weaken private enterprise; that in fact new strata of a bourgeoisie or incipient bourgeoisie develop through the bureaucratic control of state-owned enterprises and rapidly become the dominant social force, using bureaucratic means not only to guard their own narrow interests, but also to stifle base organisation, let alone socialist organisation and radical ideological tendencies.

I do not pretend to offer an exhaustive critique of the concept of the non-capitalist road. I do suggest these are only some of the aspects that need scrutiny in the light not least of the experience of the

decolonised world of the last decade. The principal pitfall of the thesis is that it makes too undifferentiated an analysis of the contesting forces within these societies and thus itself opts out of class analysis. After all, dependence, neo-colonialism, consist not only in the machinations and influence of imperialism but also in the social structures and forces internal to the new state whose interests coincide with, or are at least not antagonistic to, imperialism. It is important to identify these interests or otherwise activists will come adrift.

As for solutions, revolutionary solutions, these are even more painful and take longer to achieve than correct analysis, but they cannot be arrived at without it.

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AFRICA: Notes and Comments

by Phineas Malinga

ZAMBIA: ONE-PARTY DEMOCRACY

On 25th February, President Kaunda announced that Zambia is to become a one-party democracy. A top-level 21-member national commission has been appointed, headed by Vice-President Mainza, and including representatives of the ruling UNIP, the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, business and industry, the University, the Church, the civil service, chiefs armed forces and others. The opposition African National Congress was also invited to participate after talks between President Kaunda and ANC leader Harry Nkumbula.

Among the fundamental guiding principles announced by the President for the work of the Commission was:

> *Zambia is part and in the front line of the continent-wide revolutionary movement which seeks to liberate Africa and rid the continent of all forms of imperialism, colonialism, racism and foreign exploitation which have plagued the African people in the past. Zambia's geo-political position demands a strong and purposeful government and a united nation if the Zambian revolution is to succeed. There can, therefore, be no room for complacency.*

This dramatic announcement follows a period of strong and mounting pressure from the rank-and-file membership of the United National Independence Party and the public generally, following dangerous developments in recent months.

Friends of Zambia noted with anxiety in August last year that Simon Kapwepwe had resigned from the government to form a new opposition group – the United Progressive Party. The new party did not appear to have any definite class or ideological basis. It looked very much like an attempt to exploit a miscellaneous collection of grievances to further the ambitions of a few individuals. In a state which stands in the front line against the fascist south, the dangers of such an attempt are obvious. An irresponsible and factional opposition in Zambia must inevitably attract the support of Zambia's enemies, even if it was not created by those enemies.

Subsequent events can best be described in President Kaunda's own words:

> Government and the entire nation have given the UPP five-and-a-half months to define its policies, to tell the people of this country what it stands for and a concrete programme it offers for action to improve their lot. This, it has dismally failed to do. Instead, what we have witnessed are the most outrageous actions aimed at the destruction of life and property without regard to the sufferings of innocent and law-abiding citizens. The record of the UPP since its birth has been a catalogue of misguided wild statements and actions typical of hooligans and people without a sense of direction. They have engaged in bombing houses and buildings. They have beaten innocent people, stoned cars and threatened people's lives, particularly national leaders and any others who have openly disagreed with them. Loyal supporters of the ruling party have been attacked. Leaders of UPP have sought, in a very dangerous manner, but in vain, to isolate one section of our community in the Northern Province, from the rest of society. Attempts have been made to make them feel that they are unwanted in Zambia. But the people of the Northern Province in their wisdom have rejected sectionalism. Recent Parliamentary by-elections are a testimony of the people's unshakeable faith in unity and their determination to tread the path of peace and co-operation to prosperity.
>
> In recent months, the UPP has campaigned against economic reforms and forecast doom for this nation. Yet the same people are participating fully in the takeover of businesses; they are benefiting from the same reforms they purport to oppose. Those who are in the Government are urged to frustrate Government projects so that the entire Government machinery can be brought to a grinding halt. These are people in and outside the Government who do not

have the courage of their conviction to come out honestly as opponents of this Government. While receiving fat salaries, they encourage the sabotaging of projects designed to improve the welfare of the common man whom they are bent on misleading.

Such a situation obviously could not be allowed to continue. In a speech delivered on 4th February 1972, from which the above extracts are taken, President Kaunda announced the banning of the UPP and the restriction of a number of its leaders. He went on to remind his audience that the second National Development Plan had commenced and that maximum unity and co-operation were needed to build a better future for the Zambian people.

This action by Zambia represents a stinging rebuff for those who have been hoping and working for the removal of the bastion of African freedom in Zambia. The forces of recolonisation are tireless in their attacks, but Zambia has proved to be vigilant in self defence. Long may it remain so.

MOROCCO: PHONEY REFORMS

During the course of last year, the morass of corruption in which Morocco's semi-feudal monarchy had been wallowing became impossible to conceal from the public gaze. The wave of public scandals began with the arrest last summer of Omar Ben Messaoud, a former civil servant who had become a key figure in the innumerable shady deals between officials, politicians, local and foreign businessmen. After the attempted coup in July had revealed the extreme danger of his position, King Hassan was eventually compelled to authorise the arrest of several former ministers, two senior officials of the state mining organisation, and others. Hassan then began to negotiate with opposition forces in an attempt to create a more broadly-based government. The question now is whether these negotiations are intended to lead to a mere window-dressing operation, with a few opposition politicians bought over to join the old gang, or hold out the possibility of a real step forward.

The Moroccan popular leader, Ali Yata, in a recent speech characterised the situation as the most delicate, but also the most promising that the country had experienced since independence. His view was that negotiations between the monarchy and the nationalist parties could be fruitful if three conditions were fulfilled. First, negotiations

must take place openly, with representatives of all patriotic, progressive and revolutionary forces, not merely with a fraction of the opposition. Secondly, agreement must be reached on a minimum programme and on guarantees for its implementation. Thirdly, political prisoners must be released, civil liberties respected and, in particular, the legality of the Party of Liberation and Socialism recognised.

The minimum programme referred to in the second condition would begin with the recognition of popular power as the basis of a new constitution. This must be drawn up by a national assembly elected by universal suffrage. The programme must include radical agrarian reform, aimed at the total confiscation of lands in the possession of colonialists, feudalists and bourgeois bureaucrats, and the redivision of these lands among the poor peasantry. The key sectors of the economy, external trade, banking and insurance must be nationalised. Education must become universal and must be Arabised. Finally, foreign policy must be based on the principles of independence, co-operation with the forces of progress, support of just causes and defence of world peace.

Ali Yata expressed his confidence that it was possible under present circumstances to impose this positive compromise in reliance upon the working class, the peasants and the students, whose great struggle was already beginning to bear its first fruits.

The latest news indicates that the government is not willing to negotiate with genuine progressive forces, but on the contrary has embarked on a new policy of repression. Abdeslam Bourkia has been imprisoned for 'reconstituting an illegal party' and thirty-three other progressives are awaiting trial on the same charge. Numerous blows have been struck against the freedom of the press. The people are responding with a wave of workers' and students' strikes and peasant demonstrations.

It is against this background that a referendum should be held on the terms of a new constitution, submitted without the opportunity for amendments. While it contains certain minor improvements, states Ali Yata (statement of 21st February) 'essentially it changes nothing'. He therefore calls upon the public to boycott the referendum as essential for the election of a sovereign national constituent assembly.

GHANA: YET ANOTHER COUP

In our last issue we noted that 'the Busia' regime was heading rapidly towards crisis. Narrowly, the regime survived the autumn wave of strikes, shedding in the process the last remnants of its 'democratic' facade. The Trade Union Congress was dissolved and its funds confiscated, the usual tales about 'communist-trained agitators' being used as an excuse. The demand of the People's Popular Party for a referendum on the return of Kwame Nkrumah was brushed aside. What could not be brushed aside, however, was the ever deepening economic crisis. This crisis had, and still has, four main causes. The first is the crippling burden of foreign debts. The second is the low price of cocoa on the world market (dominated, of course, by a few monopolist manufacturers in Europe and North America). The third is that the industrialisation programme has lost its momentum and has made virtually no progress in recent years. The fourth is that the Ghanaian bureaucracy and bourgeoisie have been wasting a massive slice of the country's inadequate foreign currency resources on imports of luxury consumer goods.

In a clumsy attempt to cure the resulting balance of payments problem, Busia devalued the cedi by no less than 44 per cent. This might have damped down the demand for luxury imports, but it also hit the price level of necessary imports. These, thanks to years of stagnation in agriculture, include basic foodstuffs. Thus the devaluation caused a vicious rise in the cost of living for the already hard-pressed workers and peasants. Other attempts to solve economic problems at the expense of the working class and the country's future included the introduction of school fees and charges for medical attention.

It could not go on, and the Busia regime has fallen. Unfortunately, there are no signs that the recent coup signals a return to socialist, or even mildly progressive policies. On the contrary, many reports suggest that the immediate cause of Busia's downfall was a small, half-hearted attempt on his part to cut the privileges of civil servants and army officers. The ideological background of the new boss, Colonel Acheampong, is Catholic and Sandhurst – militarist. His orientation appears to be as pro-imperialist as that of his predecessors. If, in addition, his seizure of power represents a refusal by the selfish, extravagant bureaucratic-military clique to allow the national interest

to interfere in even the smallest way with its rake's progress, the outlook for Ghana is dark indeed. The economic situation will continue to deteriorate; repression will become more thorough and vicious. Things will get a lot worse before a solution is found.

Yet there can be no doubt of the determination of the Ghanaian people to find a way out of the mess. Their trade union movement has not been crushed. Radical opposition is more widespread than it has been for years. The socialist solution which the situation so clearly demands is on the agenda. The militarist junta will not long prevent Ghana from resuming her rightful place in the forward march of humanity.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE COMMUNISTS OF SOUTH AFRICA

Fifty Fighting Years: the South African Communist Party 1921-1971 by A. Lerumo. Inkululeko Publications, London £1.25

The leadership of the South African Communist Party had intended to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the party by publishing a review of its work. For, as A. Lerumo comments in his foreword to *Fifty Fighting Years*, 'the assessment of past achievements, as well as errors and misjudgements, is a duty of each party, helping its work and adding to the experience of the international working-class movement'. But under the conditions of fascist dictatorship at present in force in South Africa this proved impossible, and what we have instead is this book, based on a series of articles contributed to *The African Communist*, along with a general introduction and reproductions of a number of historic documents issued by the party at various stages. If it lacks the seal of 'an official party history', it at all events makes up for this formal deficiency by liveliness of writing and profundity of insight and analysis.

A party's activity cannot, of course, be well understood in abstraction from the conditions and history of the country in which it works. For this reason, quite apart from the fact that it is extremely useful for readers who may be unfamiliar with South Africa's development, it is good that the book outlines the events from the very beginnings of European settlement by Dutch traders in 1652.

Thus the first part describes the constant European expansion, the long and heroic resistance by the Xhosa, Zulu and other tribes, the contradictions that arose between British imperialists and Boer settlers which in turn led to the 'Great Trek' and the Boer Wars, and finally the beginnings of the national liberation movement and socialist organisations which were the forerunners of the Communist Party.

The immediate cause of the founding of the party lay in the rules adopted by the Communist International which precluded the affiliation of more than one party from each country. This inspired several organisations of left and internationalist positions – which, though containing various pacifist, anarchist, syndicalist and white chauvinist tendencies, had broken with or stood aloof from the opportunism of the Labour Party – to found the new organisation.

The Communist Party could not of course immediately break away from the limitations of its origins, and this led it to adopt positions which could not be defended today. There were various objective conditions as well as theoretical confusions accounting for this. The majority of members, for example, were from the predominantly white labour movement. The 1922 strike faced the party with a dilemma. The mineowners, finding it impossible to lower the subsistence wages of the African workers, decided to make an attack on the higher wages of the white labour force. Members had campaigned for years against racialism, yet felt they must support the white miners in a bloody battle in which the state used aircraft, artillery, tanks, machine-guns and rifles. The Party issued a statement supporting the strike without necessarily identifying itself with all the slogans of racially-minded white workers, and constantly reminded the strikers that it was the mineowners and not the African workers who were their enemy. All the same, it neglected to turn its attention to the African workers, who continued to work, nor did it advance demands around which they could organise. Fortunately, with more experience, and particularly under Lenin's guidance on the national question, the party was able

to change the emphasis of its work and make a turn to the masses and the national liberation struggle.

This book is lucidly written, and one gets an appraisal of the party's great achievements as well as a frank analysis of the factors which, particularly during the 'thirties, weakened it and hindered its efforts. It had indeed got a proud record. Continually and increasingly repressed, it has always been in the thick of every campaign for freedom. It led the campaign against the Pass Laws, during the years of the second world war it organised a series of 'food raids' against shopkeepers who were hoarding scarce commodities, and participated in the post-war passive resistance campaign. It has as its immediate and foremost aim, as was declared in its 1962 programme, *The Road to South African Freedom,* to work for a united front of national liberation.

The final chapter tells how though the party suffered a series of heavy blows in the 'sixties, including the arrest of a number of leading members at the headquarters at Rivonia, the party machinery has been painstakingly rebuilt. Learning from past mistakes, the South African Communist Party is arming itself with new strategies to meet the terrorism of the police state.

Reading this work in the comparative security of the United Kingdom (but all things are comparative, and in the week of writing this review thirteen workers were shot down by the paratroops in the Northern Ireland province of the U.K.) one cannot but pay the tribute of admiration and comradeship to the South African Communist Party, its leadership and its members. The Communist Party sees right through all the liberal illusions – still pretty widespread at least in Britain – about the possibility of such a gang of political criminals as the South African government and ruling class ever giving way to 'peaceful persuasion', and has taken up, together with the whole vanguard forces of the people of South Africa, the task of meeting armed force by armed force. This will be understood by British workers whose task it is to cut off the support which British governments, and especially Tory ones, so assiduously give to Apartheid.

In its statement of July, 1971, the Central Committee 'pledged unqualified support for the liberation army Umkhonto we Sizwe in its aims to recruit and train guerilla fighters, to spread the area of guerilla

warfare to the heart of the republic'. Such warfare is indeed dangerous and difficult but, above all, just. The guarantee for its ultimate victory, which will be greeted with rejoicing by the peoples of all the world, lies in the leading role of a Marxist Leninist Party, the South African Communist Party.

Maurice Cornforth
Kevin Waddington

London, February 1972

LIBERAL HISTORY OF THE ANC

The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress 1912-1952, by Peter Walshe. Hurst £5.25.

Despite the limitations of his liberal outlook and background, one must give Peter Walshe credit for good intentions in this scholarly account of the development of the African National Congress. In his introduction he writes (p. xiii) that among other things, he was trying 'to gain some better understanding of the beloved South Africa in which I was born.' He has evaluated a wealth of material in the form of microfilms, interviews, transcripts of court records and printed and mimeographed documents. In his approach he bases himself primarily on Congress literature. This has the positive result that in his presentation the black man appears as an active factor, not as a passive object manipulated and shaped by the all-powerful and omniscient whites. He deals with the formation of the A.N.C. on January 8th, 1912, quoting P. ka I. Seme addressing 'African personalities from all over southern Africa' in 'a dignified voice':

> We have discovered that in the land of our birth Africans are treated as hewers of wood and drawers of water. The white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa – a union in which we have no voice in the making of laws and no part in their administration. We have called you therefore to this Conference so that we can together devise ways and means of forming our national unity and defending our rights and privileges. (p.34)

The bulk of the remainder of the book consists, with some errors of fact and a good many more of interpretation, of the next forty years of

Congress activity and development. This history is documented in detail by Walshe unfortunately only up to 1952, that is, prior to that great series of campaigns from the joint Defiance Campaign to the Congress of the People; the development of the Congress Alliance with its common programme, the Freedom Charter, all of which have left an indelible imprint on the history of our country. Nor does the author deal with the brutal suppression of the legality of the Congress in the sixties and the Africans' determined response to continue the struggle by all means and the preparation for guerilla struggle and armed insurrection.

It is, of course, for an historian to decide the limits of time in which he writes. It is impermissable for Walshe to write in a book published in 1971 as if the Congress is already dead, to conclude that 'Congress had struggled for forty years in an attempt to check the spread of racial discrimination . . . Its efforts were totally ineffective.' On the contrary, our A.N.C. is still very much alive, and its efforts over sixty years have been effective and borne fruit in the creating of the revolutionary consciousness and organisation that will win our emancipation.

Peter Walshe upholds the thesis of the 'Cape tradition', namely that the origins of African political consciousness in our country can be traced back to the Christian missionaries in the first half of the nineteenth century and to 'Cape Liberalism'. This thesis is unacceptable. It does not explain the rejection of white churches by African converts at the end of the nineteenth century as a conscious assertion of pride in being black, as expressed among others by the Rev. Tiyo Soga (1829-1877). The thesis also obscures the link and historical continuity between the armed resistance of our people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the modern forms of struggle developed by the A.N.C.

The real origins and roots of African political consciousness lie in the historic struggles against land-robbery, starvation, white racialism and national degradation and humiliation – struggles which began long before Ntsikana was converted to Christianity or Nongqase, daughter of Mhlakaza, saw 'visions'.

Another factor which seriously reduces the value of Peter Walshe's work is his bias against Communism, and particularly his distortion or misunderstanding of the relationship between the A.N.C. and the

Communist Party. In 1931 he writes for instance that the Party proved 'unable to capture the A.N.C.' and was 'rebuffed from within the A.N.C.' and similar formulations appear elsewhere. The writer is unaware of or ignores the dynamic history of fruitful interaction between the Marxists and the African liberation movement, since 1915 when the Left broke with the Labour Party and formed the International Socialist League.

Walshe is incorrect in his assertion that prior to 1928 the Comintern paid no attention to South Africa. In 1921 at the Third Congress of the Comintern in Moscow, the first African Communist to be represented within that body, D. Ivon Jones, demanded that the International should pay more attention to the cause of black liberation, not only in South Africa but also in America. This was realised a year later at the Fourth Congress, when the 'Negro Commission' was elected. From then on the Comintern's executive (on which South Africa was represented) discussed the situation in our country. In fact, the resolution of the Sixth C.I. Congress in 1928 was the result of a long and careful study of the problems of South Africa.

The sterile descriptive approach characteristic of bourgeois historiography is incapable of combining analysis with synthesis, generalisation with description; continuity with coincidence and, not least, of portraying in proper historical perspective the dialectical interconnection between masses, party and leadership.

If this review has seemed to be harsh towards what is on the whole a sympathetic history of the African National Congress, it is because we have learned to be wary of those who praise us for the wrong reasons. Behind anti-Communist cliches and distortions there has all too often lurked the conscious or unconscious intentions of imperialist-orientated 'friends' to drive a wedge between Communist and non-Communist revolutionaries; and to saddle our A.N.C. with a bourgeois ideology and orientation which it never had. From its inception the A.N.C. was not a bourgeois organisation; it was and remained an organisation of the dispossessed black slaves of South Africa.

With these reservations I nonetheless recommend the book to the readers of this journal.

F. Meli

January 1972

TWO BOOKS BY THOMAS KANZA

Thomas R. Kanza: *Evolution & Revolution in Africa,* Rex Collings, London 1971, (£1.50).

Conflict in the Congo, Penguin African Library, England 1972, (65p).

Thomas Kanza, son of a leading politician of the Lower Congo region, first Congolese graduate, and now a diplomat-politician in premature exile-and-retirement, has drawn on his unusual experience to produce the first inside story of the Congo crisis written by a Congolese. It is a disappointing book, wavering between autobiography and reportage, adding little significant new detail and much trivia to what is already known about the tragic re-colonisation of the Congo immediately after independence by first the Belgians and then the Americans under cover of the United Nations. Read in conjunction with his short, mediocre and over-priced essay in political theory, Kanza's book on the Congo crisis reveals that the author has learned remarkably little despite his unique participation in the initial efforts of Lumumba's government to secure with UN assistance the independence of his country. That meant, in mid-1960, the expulsion of the Belgian troops which entered the Congo ten days after 'independence', the quick Africanisation of the Congolese National Army, and the suppression of the secession of Katanga which was being blatantly engineered by Belgian settlers, financial interests and politicians in league with the puppet Tshombe and his Conakat tribalist party. The then Secretary-General of the UN, Dag Hammarskjold, playing a deep double-game of diplomatic deception, delayed the implementation of the UN resolution long enough for Lumumba's government to be divided against itself and then unseated, which led quickly to Lumumba's death and the disastrous internal strife and neo-colonisation of the Congo from which its peoples have not yet recovered.

Despite the clear evidence of American domination of the UN operation, its motives and consequences, Kanza does not now regret his misplaced trust in Hammarskjold, and obviously feels now as he did then that Lumumba's resolute anti-imperialist stand was some sort of tactical mistake. He describes how he attempted to tone down Lumumba's famous indictment of Belgium's colonial record in the

Congo delivered on the occasion of the independence celebrations in the presence of King Baudouin. As Lumumba's diplomatic representative to the UN he seems to have been more concerned not to be rude to his Belgian counter-parts and their Western allies than to present the struggling state's legitimate demands forcefully.

So it comes as no surprise to find in his essay on the future of Africa nothing more than a travesty of what Marxism is about, its rejection in favour of an African socialism derived from a romanticised and irrelevant conception of pre-colonial African society, and a sterile plea for the mental decolonisation of contemporary African politicians. Kanza would do well to start that process of decolonisation with himself, by studying what Marx and Lenin really wrote about classes and class struggle, and ridding himself of the fatuous notion that the socialist states exploit African countries through the aid they give.

S.P.

A Namibian Patriot in Court

Statement by Accused No. 24: Toivo Hermann Ja Toivo During the Trial of South West Africans in Pretoria February 1, 1968

My Lord:

We find ourselves here in a foreign country, convicted under laws made by people whom we have always considered as foreigners. We find ourselves tried by a Judge who is not our countryman and who has not shared our background.

When this case started, Counsel tried to show that this Court had no jurisdiction to try us. What they had to say was of a technical and legal nature. The reasons may mean little to some of us, but it is the deep feeling of all of us that we should not be tried here in Pretoria.

You, my Lord, decided that you had the right to try us, because your Parliament gave you that right. That ruling has not and could not have changed our feelings. We are Namibians and not South Africans. We do not now, and will not in the future, recognise your right to govern us; to make laws for us in which we had no say; to treat our country as if it were your property and as if you were our masters.

We have always regarded South Africa as an intruder in our country. This is how we have always felt and this is how we feel now, and it is on this basis that we have faced this trial.

I speak of 'we' because I am trying to speak not only for myself, but for others as well, and especially for those of my fellow accused

who have not had the benefit of any education. I think also that when I say 'we', the overwhelming majority of non-white people in South West Africa would like to be included.

We are far away from our homes; not a single member of our families has come to visit us, never mind be present at our trial. The Pretoria Gaol, the Police Headquarters at Gompol where we were interrogated and where statements were extracted from us, and this court are all we have seen in Pretoria. We have been cut off from our people and the world. We all wondered whether the headmen would have repeated some of their lies if our people had been present in court to hear them.

The South African Government has again shown its strength by detaining us for as long as it pleased; keeping some of us in solitary confinement for 300 to 400 days and bringing us to the capital to try us. It has shown its strength by passing an act especially for us and having it made retrospective. It has even chosen an ugly name to call us by. One's own are called patriots, or at least rebels; your opponents are called terrorists.

A court can only do justice in political cases if it understands the position of those that it has in front of it. The state has not only wanted to convict us, but also to justify the policy of the South African Government. We will not even try to present the other side of the picture, because we know that a court that has not suffered in the same way that we have cannot understand us. This is perhaps why it is said that one should be tried by one's equals. We have felt from the very time of our arrest that we were not being tried by our equals but by our masters, and that those who have brought us to trial very often do not even do us the courtesy of calling us by our surnames. Had we been tried by our equals, it would not have been necessary to have any discussion about our grievances. They would have been known to those set to judge us.

It suits the government of South Africa to say that it is ruling South West Africa with the consent of its people. This is not true. Our organisation, the South West African People's Organisation, is the largest political organisation in South West Africa. We considered ourselves a political party. We know that whites do not think of blacks as politicians – only as agitators. Many of our people, through no fault of their own, have had no education at all. This does not mean that they do not know what they want.

A man does not have to be formally educated to know that he wants to live with his family where he wants to live, and not where an official chooses to tell him to live; to move about freely and not require a pass; to earn a decent wage; to be free to work for the person of his choice for as long as he wants; and finally, to be ruled by the people that he wants to be ruled by, and not by those who rule him because they have more guns than he has.

Our grievances are called 'so-called' grievances. We do not believe South Africa is in South West Africa in order to provide facilities and work for non-whites. It is there for its own selfish reasons. For the first forty years it did practically nothing to fulfill its 'sacred trust'. It only concerned itself with the welfare of the whites.

Since 1962 because of the pressure from inside by the non-whites and especially my organisation, and because of the limelight placed on our country by the world, South Africa has been trying to do a bit more. It rushed the Bantustan Report so that it would at least have something to say at the World Court.

Only one who is not white and has suffered the way we have can say whether our grievances are real or 'so-called'.

Those of us who have some education, together with our uneducated brethren, have always struggled to get freedom. The idea of our freedom is not liked by South Africa. It has tried in this court to prove through the mouths of a couple of its paid Chiefs and a paid official that S.W.A.P.O. does not represent the people of South West Africa. If the government of South Africa were sure that S.W.A.P.O. did not represent the innermost feelings of the people of South West Africa, it would not have taken the trouble to make it impossible for S.W.A.P.O. to advocate its peaceful policy.

South African officials want to believe that S.W.A.P.O. is an irresponsible organisation that resorts to the level of telling people not to get vaccinated. As much as white South Africans may want to believe this, this is not S.W.A.P.O. We sometimes feel that it is what the government would like S.W.A.P.O. to be. It may be true that some member or even members of S.W.A.P.O. somewhere refused to do this. The reason for such refusal is that some people in our part of the world have lost confidence in the governors of our country and they are not prepared to accept even the good that they are trying to do.

Your government, my Lord, undertook a very special responsibility when it was awarded the mandate over us after the First World War. It assumed a sacred trust to guide us towards independence and to prepare us to take our place among the nations of the world.

We believe that South Africa has abused that trust because of its belief in racial supremacy (that white people have been chosen by God to rule the world) and apartheid. We believe that for fifty years South Africa has failed to promote the development of our people. Where are our trained men? The wealth of our country has been used to train your people for leadership and the sacred duty of preparing the indigenous people to take their place among the nations of the world has been ignored.

I know of no case in the last twenty years of a parent who did not want his child to go to school if the facilities were available, but even if, as it was said, a small percentage of parents wanted their children to look after cattle, I am sure that South Africa was strong enough to impose its will on this, as it has done in so many other respects. To us it has always seemed that our rulers wanted to keep us backward for their benefit.

1963 for us was to be the year of freedom. From 1960 it looked as if South Africa could not oppose the world for ever. The world is important to us. In the same way as all laughed in court when they heard that an old man tried to bring down a helicopter with a bow and arrow, we laughed when South Africa said that it would oppose the world. We knew that the world was divided, but as time went on it at least agreed that South Africa had no right to rule us.

I do not claim that it is easy for men of different races to live at peace with one another. I myself had no experience of this in my youth, and at first it surprised me that men of different races could live together in peace. But now I know it to be true and to be something for which we must strive.

The South African Government creates hostility by separating people and emphasising their differences. We believe that by living together, people will learn to lose their fear of each other. We also believe that this fear which some of the whites have of Africans is based on their desire to be superior and privileged and that when whites see themselves as part of South West Africa, sharing with us all its hopes and troubles, then that fear will disappear. Separation is said to be a

natural process. But why, then, is it imposed by force, and why then is it that whites have the superiority?

Headmen are used to oppress us. This is not the first time that foreigners have tried to rule indirectly – we know that only those who are prepared to do what their masters tell them become headmen. Most of those who had some feeling for their people and who wanted independence have been intimidated into accepting the policy from above. Their guns and sticks are used to make people say they support them.

I have come to know that our people cannot expect progress as a gift from anyone, be it the United Nations or South Africa. Progress is something we shall have to struggle and work for. And I believe that the only way in which we shall be able and fit to secure that progress is to learn from our own experience and mistakes.

Your Lordship emphasised in your judgement the fact that our arms come from communist countries, and also that words commonly used by communists were to be found in our documents. But my Lord, in the documents produced by the state there is another type of language. It appears even more often than the former. Many documents finish up with an appeal to the Almighty to guide us in our struggle for freedom. It is the wish of the South African Government that we should be discredited in the western world. That is why it calls our struggle a communist plot; but this will not be believed by the world. The world knows that we are not interested in ideologies.

We feel that the world as a whole has a special responsibility towards us. This is because the land of our fathers was handed over to South Africa by a world body. It is a divided world, but it is a matter of hope for us that it at least agrees about one thing – that we are entitled to freedom and justice.

Other mandated territories have received their freedom. The judgement of the World Court was a bitter disappointment to us. We felt betrayed and we believed that South Africa would never fulfill its trust. Some felt that we would secure our freedom only by fighting for it. We knew that the power of South Africa is overwhelming, but we also knew that our case is a just one and our situation intolerable – why should we not also receive our freedom?

We are sure that the world's efforts to help us in our plight will continue, whatever South Africans may call us.

We do not expect that independence will end our troubles, but we do believe that our people are entitled – as are all peoples – to rule themselves. It is not really a question of whether South Africa treats us well or badly, but that South West Africa is our country and we wish to be our own masters.

There are some who will say that they are sympathetic with our aims, but that they condemn violence. I would answer that I am not by nature a man of violence and I believe that violence is a sin against God and my fellowmen. S.W.A.P.O. itself was a non-violent organisation, but the South African Government is not truly interested in whether opposition is violent or non-violent. It does not wish to hear any opposition to apartheid. Since 1963, S.W.A.P.O. meetings have been banned. It is true that it is the tribal authorities who have done so, but they work with the South African Government, which has never lifted a finger in favour of political freedom. We have found ourselves voteless in our own country and deprived of the right to meet and state our own political opinions.

Is it surprising that in such times my countrymen have taken up arms? Violence is truly fearsome, but who would not defend his property and himself against a robber? And we believe that South Africa has robbed us of our country.

I have spent my life working in S.W.A.P.O., which is an ordinary political party like any other. Suddenly we in S.W.A.P.O. found that a war situation had arisen and that our colleagues and South Africa were facing each other on the field of battle. Although I had not been responsible for organising my people militarily and although I believed we were unwise to fight the might of South Africa while we were so weak, I could not refuse to help them when the time came.

My Lord, you found it necessary to brand me as a coward. During the Second World War, when it became evident that both my country and your country were threatened by the dark clouds of Nazism, I risked my life to defend both of them, wearing a uniform with orange bands on it.

But some of your countrymen when called to battle to defend civilisation resorted to sabotage against their own fatherland. I volunteered to face German bullets, and as a guard of military installations, both in South West Africa and the Republic, was prepared to be the victim of their sabotage. Today they are our masters and are considered heroes, and I am called the coward.

When I consider my country, I am proud that my countrymen have taken up arms for their people and I believe that anyone who calls himself a man would not despise them.

In 1964 the A.N.C. and P.A.C. in South Africa were suppressed. This convinced me that we were too weak to face South Africa's force by waging battle. When some of my country's soldiers came back I foresaw the trouble there would be for S.W.A.P.O., my people, and me personally. I tried to do what I could to prevent my people from going into the bush. In my attempts I became unpopular with some of my people, but this, too, I was prepared to endure. Decisions of this kind are not easy to make. My loyalty is to my country. My organisation could not work properly – it could not even hold meetings.

I had no answer to the question 'Where has your non-violence got us?' Whilst the World Court judgement was pending, I at least had that to fall back on. When we failed, after years of waiting, I had no answer to give my people.

Even though I did not agree that people should go into the bush, I could not refuse to help them when I knew that they were hungry. I even passed on the request for dynamite. It was not an easy decision. Another man might have been able to say 'I will have nothing to do with that sort of thing.' I was not, and I could not remain a spectator in the struggle of my people for their freedom.

I am a loyal Namibian and I could not betray my people to their enemies. I admit that I decided to assist those who had taken up arms. I know that the struggle will be long and bitter. I also know that my people will wage that struggle, whatever the cost.

Only when we are granted our independence will the struggle stop. Only when our human dignity is restored to us, as equals of the whites, will there be peace between us.

We believe that South Africa has a choice – either to live at peace with us or to subdue us by force. If you choose to crush us and impose your will on us then you not only betray your trust, but you will live in security for only so long as your power is greater than ours. No South African will live at peace in South West Africa, for each will know that his security is based on force and that without force he will face rejection by the people of South West Africa.

My co-accused and I have suffered. We are not looking forward to our imprisonment. We do not, however, feel that our efforts and

sacrifice have been wasted. We believe that human suffering has its effect even on those who impose it. We hope that what has happened will persuade the whites of South Africa that we and the world may be right and they may be wrong. Only when white South Africans realise this and act on it will it be possible for us to stop our struggle for freedom and justice in the land of our birth.

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